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The Counterfeit Hawkins

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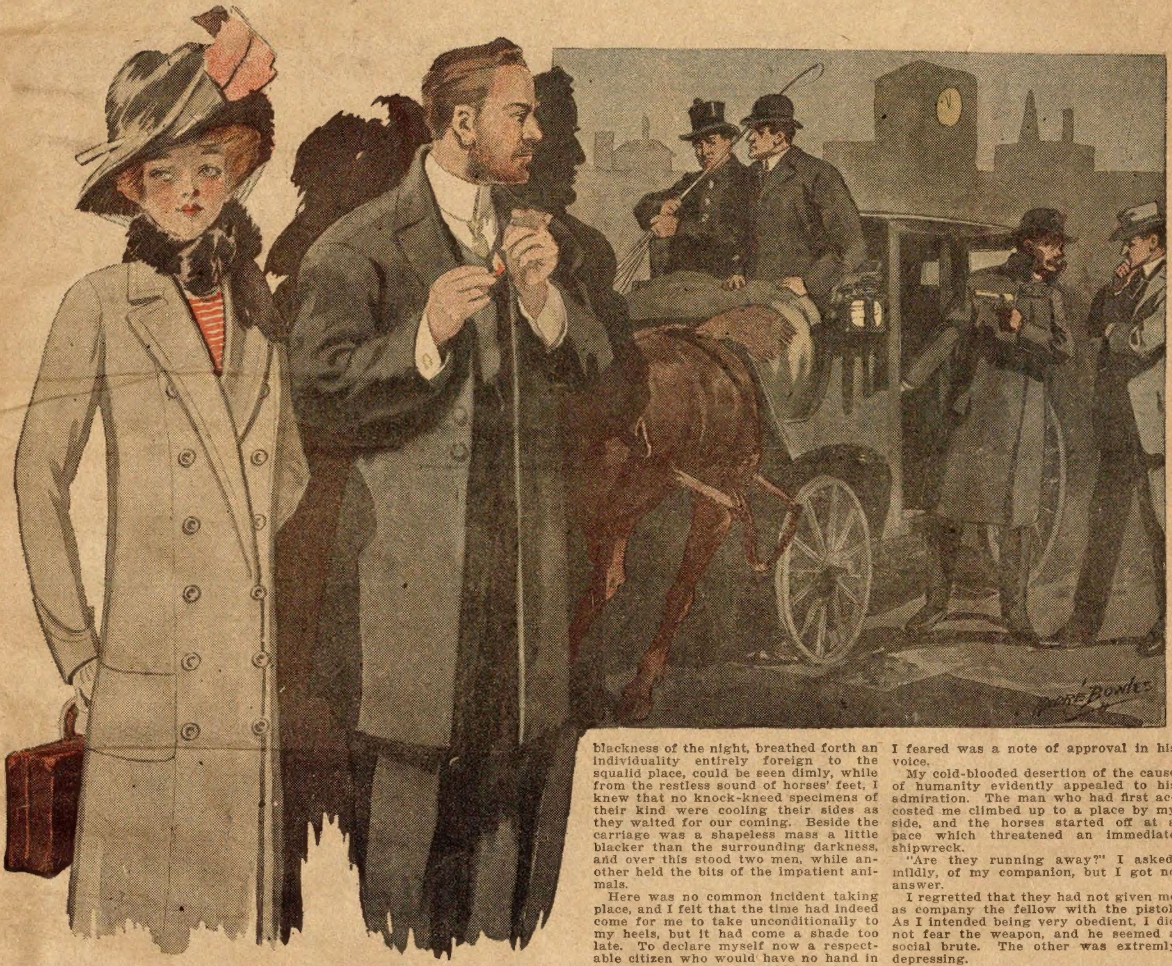

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CHAPTER I.

OF COURSE I realized that I was in a wretched plight, but just how wretched, it did not occur to me until I felt my arm tightly grasped, and heard some one whisper hoarsely in my ear, "My man, I see you are in need of money."

It was quite dark where I stood, and a fine mist was falling. An abominable night for standing about out of doors, but there was that in the voice of the man who accosted me which checked my first impulse to fling off his hand and reply to his question with a burst of laughter.

For five days I had been up in the mountains on a lonely tramp. For one of these days, the last, I had been wholly lost, and for several hours of that last day I had been engaged in trying to reach the top of a deep, rocky gorge into which I had fallen, which fall accounted for the truly disreputable condition of my clothing.

I was hungry, thirsty, and chilled to the bone, but I was also young, strong and keen for anything which promised to end in a novel adventure.

The town into which I had wandered seemed a straggling affair. It certainly was ill-lighted, and the alley in which I stood had a villainous look.

Yes, I could forego the comfort of supper and dry clothing just a little longer. Eleven months out of every twelve I had those things to the point of surfeit.

"We all have need of money, have we not?" I asked, adopting the bitter levity of the stage tramp who has seen better days.

"If you have a surplus on hand, just fork it over, and I will buy myself an opera hat and spike-tail coat."

The man made no pretense to join me in my playful mood.

Staring fixedly at his face through the murky light, it grew clearer to me, and I could read in it a desperate purpose.

I was of half a mind to draw back even yet.

"Come with me," whispered he, and, throwing my last remnant of sense to the winds, I followed him, dodging and skulking, even as he dodged and skulked, into a yet darker corner of the dark and mist-soaked alley.

A carriage, which, even through the blackness of the night, breathed forth an individuality entirely foreign to the squalid place, could be seen dimly, while from the restless sound of horses' feet, I knew that no knock-kneed specimens of their kind were cooling their sides as they waited for our coming. Beside the carriage was a shapeless mass a little blacker than the surrounding darkness, and over this stood two men, while another held the bits of the impatient animals.

Here was no common incident taking place, and I felt that the time had indeed come for me to take unconditionally to my heels, but it had come a shade too late. To declare myself now a respectable citizen who would have no hand in robbery or bloodshed would have been a most unhealthy proceeding.

There was something suspiciously human to me about that black mass beside the carriage. Even a casual glance gave one a notion that there were legs attached to it, and I fancied that, as we neared the scene, a sound resembling a human groan struck upon my ears. An inclination of natural curiosity caused me to swerve slightly from my path in order to pass nearer to the bundle, but I was immediately discouraged in the attempt by having a circle of cold steel pressed with unmistakable fervor against my back.

"Keep right along to the carriage," said a voice, a new one, and a very coarse, unfeeling one at that. "Your help ain't needed outside here, so just climb right in."

It is needless to say that I climbed in with alacrity. I was not prepared to demand explanations which would plainly be of an embarrassing nature for a perfect stranger, a stranger who had about him nothing more suggestive of humanity than a nondescript pair of legs.

"With pleasure," I murmured, as I nimbly withdrew myself from contact with the persuasive weapon. The man at the other end of it laughed.

"You'll do, I guess," he said, with what I feared was a note of approval in his voice.

My cold-blooded desertion of the cause of humanity evidently appealed to his admiration. The man who had first accosted me climbed up to a place by my side, and the horses started off at a pace which threatened an immediate shipwreck.

"Are they running away?" I asked, mildly, of my companion, but I got no answer.

I regretted that they had not given me as company the fellow with the pistol. As I intended being very obedient, I did not fear the weapon, and he seemed a social brute. The other was extremly depressing.

If the horses were running, they were doing so with their wits about them, for, after what seemed to me a very long time, during which I refrained from exposing myself to further rebuff from my fellow traveler, we slowed down to a more reasonable pace, and then my gloomy friend leaned forward and peered with disconcerting scrutiny into my face, as the carriage lamp threw a few dull rays across it.

"Do you know anything about behaving in decent society?" he asked harshly, and without the least show of apology in his manner for the undoubted rudeness of the question.

I sighed. "And to think," I said, plaintively, "that I fancied I carried the stamp of culture about with me. Sir, do I look like a person who would eat with his knife?"

The stupid creature flew very angry. It was clear to me by this time that he had not a ray of humor in his entire makeup.

"None of your fool jokes!" he positively snarled. "You just listen a while now, and let me talk."

I felt almost irresistibly impelled to suggest that I had been waiting some time for him to commence, but the gleam of something upon which he was resting his hand restrained the sudden impulse.

"Go on," I said, meekly "I feel rather interested in what I am supposed to be doing here with you."

My surly friend, after having wasted so much time in silence, now seemed disgracefully anxious to keep the floor. He tripped me in my speech before I had the last syllable of it well off my lips.

"In a few moments," he blurted out, "we will reach a house. You are to put on and keep on this long coat, until you get to a room where you will put on things you find there, and then come down and take dinner with a small party of ladies and myself. Remember you are a Mr. Hawkins, a lawyer who has come to conduct a Miss Manning to her guardians."

"But, my dear sir," I broke in, despite what I had to fear from such indiscretion," "about this Hawkins now. Are they supposed to know the fellow? Won't there be things he will be supposed to talk about?"

The fellow swore shockingly.

"Do you take me for a fool," he snarled, in the way he had. "Miss Manning has never seen this Hawkins. All I want is a man. Adam would have done as well as you, if he had happened to come along."

"He would have been almost as well dressed, anyway," I said cheerfully, but, as I have remarked, the creature hadn't a grain of humor.

"I can't see you very well," he said, irritably, "but I'm afraid you aren't old enough. However, it is too late to think about that now."

"I should need time to alter a fault like that," I murmured, apologetically, while my mind was taking great, dizzy leaps, as it tried to grasp at a few threads of the horrible tangle in which I had become involved.

Treachery was on foot, and it against a woman. Well, it was a bad thing to deceive, but a worse thing to deal unfairly with a woman. I decided to preserve my incognito a little longer.

"When am I supposed to escort the lady to her guardians," I asked, in a placating manner. "Wouldn't it be well to know at least as much as that?"

At that moment the carriage stopped.

"Tonight," muttered the man. "You are to drive her over to take the midnight train. Here, get on this coat, and be mighty quick about it!"

CHAPTER II.

The next moment, enveloped in a long coat which my companion had forced upon me, even as his last word left his lips, I was standing with him before a dimly lighted entrance of a huge house, seemingly surrounded by a forest of rain-soaked trees. To say that I was confused would greatly belittle my sentiments.

Gladly, at that moment, would I have welcomed a renewal of my wanderings through the mountains. Hunger, cold, and fatigue are not pleasing sensations, but there are those to which they may form a pleasing contrast. I was aware, however, through all my own confusion, that my unsocial friend was exhibiting a pardonable degree of nervousness. It found vent in a burst of unjust rage at me, when, in a stage-fright panic, I ventured to whisper, as we reached the door. "Which am I, Larkins or Hawkins?"

For answer he gave me a savage thrust with his elbow, together with his whispered, "Hawkins—and you forget it again at your peril, my man!"

I realized that he was a brute, as well as the poorest company with which I had ever fallen in, but we were wandering, by then, into a hall in which there were altogether too many lights for my comfort, and my speculations upon the man's character were brought to a sudden end.

As we entered the hall from the outside, two people entered it from an inner room, the first of these being a woman, so tall and forbidding in her aspect that I felt an instinctive impulse to dodge as she rapidly neared my side.

"So this is Mr. Hawkins," she exclaimed, with what seemed to me most unnecessary impressiveness, considering that I was supposed to have merely a business connection with the family.

Perhaps, though, I stood high in my profession. I would try at any rate to do Hawkins credit. I rather suspected it was not his fault that he was not there to answer for himself.

"So pleased, I am sure," I murmured, feebly, for she had gripped me by the hand, and was overhauling me with an eye so keen that I felt certain she must know that I was out at the knees and elbows, while I became painfully conscious of a five days' beard which shadowed the lower portion of my face.

"This is Mrs. Bowen, Hawkins," exclaimed my late companion in a voice which carried with a suggestion of chattering teeth. "Ah, here comes Miss Manning," he broke off, to cry out with an affectation of pleasure really pathetic in a man with such a kill-joy face as he turned toward a second lady, now slowly approaching our little group.

I followed his eyes in desperate embarrassment, but the next instant was using my sight to its fullest extent, so pleasing an object had I found upon which to exercise its powers. Forgetful of everything else—all my embarrassment, past and present, all peril which lay behind and that which was sure to come—I abandoned myself for blissful moment to unqualified admiration of the figure approaching us, the figure of an uncommonly graceful girl, with a look of appealing anxiety upon her handsome face. No, it is useless to attempt any further description of her, but, coming as I had from the darkness and discomfort of the night, surrounded as I was with mystery and danger, suffice it to say that there was that about her which set my heart beating with as joyous a thrill as if I were both warm and dry, as if the sun were shining in the sodden heavens, and Mrs. Bowen and my surly jailer were not watching me like a pair of hungry tigers.

As she drew nearer, embarrassment overmastered the poetry of my first emotions. She like all of the others, seemed disposed to view we with distressing freedom and curiosity. Apparently this Hawkins was expected to play a prominent part in the domestic drama in which I was involved.

In the meantime, Miss Manning had advanced to my side with an impetuous rush, and was looking up at me with a blending of confidence and bewilderment in her face, which completed the confusion which already had me by the throat.

I think ever my sulky friend was temporarily overcome by the irregularity of it all. At any rate, he remained entirely dumb, nothwithstanding that a speech of some sort might have been reasonably expected of him at that dramatic point.

Miss Manning, however, waited for nothing of the sort. She was astonished at what she saw before her as a so-called legal adviser. Nothing could be plainer than that, but that my presence there, soiled and unshaven as I was, was most welcome to her, was equally plain, and the delight of it sent thrills of joy leaping through my veins.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you, Mr. Hawkins," she cried, and with that she thrust into mine a small hand, which I grasped with a fervor entirely uncalled for by my supposed relationship to my youthful client.

"So delighted, I am sure, Miss Manning," I murmured, uneasily conscious that the military Mrs. Bowen was standing at my elbow, and that my carriage companion was also crowding close up to my side, while I was hysterically certain that I would incur his wrath by saying the wrong thing or asking questions which would show me up for the impostor that I was.

"I trust that you are quite well. Your guardian has been much concerned about your health," I went on, in great embarrassment, for being once started, I seemed to find no place for stopping, until a jerk at my coat, which, but for appearances might have been a tap upon my skull, brought me to a sudden halt.

"I think, Hawkins, that we had better go and get ready for dinner," exclaimed my assailant, with a ghastly attempt at politeness in his voice, as he glared me murderously in the eye. "It will be ready shortly, will it not, Mrs. Bowen?" he asked, turning to that appalling person, who still stuck doggedly to her post beside my elbow.

"Directly, Mr. Cavendish," she said, to my relief, giving me a name by which I might address the individual who had me in tow.

"In that case, Cavendish," I exclaimed, beaming upon him, to call his attention to how quick I was to take the cue, "we had better be rather lively. I struck a wretched hotel today," I added, turning apologetically to Mrs. Bowen, who met my confidence with a glare of displeasure, while Cavendish got me by the elbow and started me upstairs,, just as Miss Manning exclaimed, in bewilderment: "Hotel? Didn't you come straight from home, then, Mr. Hawkins? Mr. Babcock said you would."

Despite a threatening tug at my sleeve, I faced my lovely questioner with a gracious smile.

"A little—business of which Mr.—er—Babcock was not aware when he wrote," I said. Then I yielded myself to the pressure upon my arm, with the proud certainty that at least my captors must have discovered by this time that I was no fool.

Once out of earshot, Cavendish faced me with an ugly scowl.

"You talk just as little as you can," he hissed. "A pretty mess you might have made of it."

"But, see here, Cavendish," I exclaimed, plaintive with my disappointment, "do you know I thought I was doing very well. Oh, by the way, who is Babcock?"

I have a strong impression that, at that moment, the fellow was tempted to risk all for the pleasure of putting a bullet through my heart. He actually fingered the handle of his revolver as it rested in his pocket, but motives too strong to allow the play of personal emotions at length restrained him.

"He—is—her guardian," he said, speaking slowly, as if putting a great restraint upon himself. "Go in there," he added, an outburst of anger betraying him into a rudeness of speech most unbecoming to a man of his years, "I will send you something to take the place of your wretched rags."

I went into the room to which he pointed, and found it to be a dismal, old-fashioned sleeping apartment, made yet more ghostly by a vast number of painted portraits of people whose faces should not have been preserved on canvas for generations fortunate enough to have lived after them.

I was sitting before the portrait of a particularily long-nosed old gentleman, wondering if the act of sitting down before an artist had been one of pure maliciousness, when the door was pushed open unceremoniously, and a man walked in carrying a suit of clothes.

"Here are the things Cavendish said you was to put on," he announced, with more the air of a jailer bringing a ration of bread and water than that of an ordinary servant supplying the needs of a stranded guest. As he spoke, he flung the things down upon a chair beside me and moved to go.

"Yes, but here you, Tom, or Joe, or Jerry, or whatever your name is," I cried springing up, "I must have a bath and a shave before I can present myself before the ladies. Just bring on your razor, will you, and go at this stubble patch upon my chin."

The man stopped and distorted his ugly features with an offensive grin.

"You ain't to have no shave," he said, watching with evident relish the look of angry dismay which must have leaped to my face as the meaning of his words dawned up me. "He says that you would look too young without them whiskers."

"Not to have a shave!" I cried, angrily, surveying my villainous face in a mirror beside. "Well, then, you can go and tell your man Cavendish that I am going down to meet his friends," and I flung myself down once more upon my chair, with the air of having the whole thing nicely settled.

If I fancied, however, that I had created confusion in the ranks of the enemy, I was doomed to be disappointed. With an expression of the keenest relish upon his face, the man approached me, drawing from his pocket one of those revolvers of which they all seemed to make no more than most people of a pocket-knife."

"I was to see that you dressed at once and went downstairs," he said, and I could see that he was yearning for further rebellion upon my part."

I looked him steadily in the eyes for a moment, and then I rose. "At least bring me soap and water," I said grimly, "I presume there is no objection to my being clean."

"Oh, I guess not," he said, returning his revolver to his pocekt with a disappointed air. "Mebbe," he said, with a look of hope returning to his face, "you won't be exactly stuck upon your clothes."

I certainly was not, when I was once inside them, and, but for the yearning for trouble in the face of the man watching me, and but for the revolver which he was itching to use upon me, I should have openly defied my captors then and there.

Really Cavenish was more clever than he looked, for he had advanced my age by a good ten years in forcing me to don that suit of ill-fitting, rusty black, and by preserving the ruffianly effect of my five days' growth of beard.

Broad as were my shoulders, those of the coat extended beyond them a good two inches, both left and right. I glanced wrathfully at the portrait of the long-nosed man upon the wall wondering if it was that of some dead and gone giant, part of whose wardrobe I was doomed to wear.

The man who sat and watched the progress of my toilet was positively bubbling over with delight at the signs of wrath I could not repress each time I looked at the reflection of myself in the mirror.

"Time's up," he said, at last. "Mr. Cavendish said we must get you downstairs before the women."

My spirit was so broken by what the glass told me of my appearance that my first impulse to throttle the fellow had degenerated into a feeling of feeble spite. But for my raging hunger, I should, I fear, have begged the privilege of remaining buried in the obscurity of my room. I had lost all interest even in the handsome Miss Manning. How could a man with any self-respect harbor thoughts of sentiment, garbed as I was, and with a smudgy fringe of whiskers upon his chin?

"Lead on," I said, dejectedly, giving a final jerk at the hideous lavender tie, which was the crowning insult to the costume which I had been forced to wear.

CHAPTER III.

Cavendish was waiting for me in a long, dreary room when I got below stairs, and, if I had need any confirmation of my suspicion that the fellow was absolutely without a sense of humor, I had it in the fact that, in place of greeting my appearance with a roar of laughter, he accorded me only a fretful, suspicious frown.

"You look too young, even in those things," he snapped, by the way of a little encouragement, as I walked toward him with a yearning in my heart to shed his life's blood after some new and ghastly fashion.

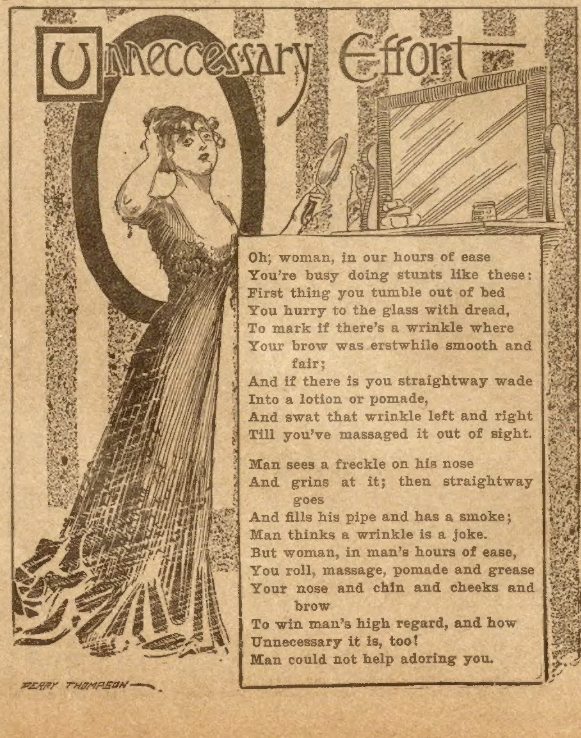
"My dear Cavendish," I cried, plaintively, "surely this Hawkins is not yet in his dotage. Consider that he is supposed to be able to travel about and act as an escort for young and helpless women."

As usual my talk seemed annoying to him, and he had opened his lips for one of his brutal retorts, when Miss Manning and Mrs. Bowen came into the room.

Mrs. Bowen had certainly not improved her appearance by evening gown. Her dress was black and crackled like heavy paper as she moved, while she had strung herself over here and there with jet chains, and planted upon her iron-gray hair a feather ornament as stiff and upright as a horn.

It was the vision of Miss Manning, however, which made me quail. What an apparition for a man in need of a razor and wearing the clothing of an unfashionable giant! Soft, clinging silk of the kind of blue used in the heavens on choice summer days, a bare, round throat, dimples, and the wide-open eyes, which the stuff in her dress must have been bought to match. An array of charms to inspire a ruinous outlay at one's tailor's, and there I stood garbed for low comedy and forced to play my middle-aged role by the means of an elaborate system of concealed firearms.

Her eyes, as they fell upon me, lighted up once more with that same look of re-



Oh; woman, in our hours of ease
You're busy doing stunts like these:
First thing you tumble out of bed
You hurry to the glass with dread,
To mark if there's a wrinkle where
Your brow was erstwhile smooth and fair;
And if there is you straightway wade
Into a lotion or pomade,
And swat that wrinkle left and right
Till you've massaged it out of sight.

Man sees a freckle on his nose
And grins at it; then straightway goes
And fills his pipe and has a smoke;
Man thinks a wrinkle is a joke.
But woman, in man's hours of ease,
You roll, massage, pomade and grease
Your nose and chin and cheeks and brow
To win man's high regard, and how
Unnecessary it is, too!
Man could not help adoring you.

lief and confidence, and she hastened toward me with a freedom which I knew was inspired by our supposed business relations.

"We will be starting in about two hours, will we not, Mr. Hawkins?" she cried, and then, in a lower voice, before I could stammer out a guess as to whether this was so: "Oh, I am so glad that we are going! It has been so wretched, what with the death and all, that I have been fairly wild."

The death. Whose death? I wondered.

"Very distressing I am sure," I muttered, miserably, as she made a pause for the proper reply. "And so sudden," I added, confusedly, as I fancied that I detected a look of disappointment in her eyes, as if she had not found me sufficiently sympathetic. She looked definitely bewildered at that, and I regretted my unruly tongue as energetically as Cavendish could have done.

"Sudden—why, hardly that," she had begun, when we were interrupted by Mrs. Bowen, who literally charged down upon us.

"You will give me your arm out to dinner, Mr. Hawkins," she fairly ordered, and, no sooner had I obeyed, than she gripped me, muttering fiercely: "You are not to talk with Miss Manning when we are not around. If you do, it will be the worse for you, remember that."

It certainly was a novel sensation, that of moving sedately down to dinner, with a lady upon your arm who delivered orders to you, under her breath, of a mysterious, threatening kind, while behind you walked a handsome girl, at whom you had not the courage to look, because of the grotesque figure you must be cutting in another man's suit of seedy black.

We were truly not a lively party as we sat down. Cavendish looked as if every nerve was on the rack, with his somber, pallid face, at which Mrs. Bowen glanced from time to time with vigorous contempt. I could easily imagine how their society might be most depressing to Miss Manning, and was seized with an irresistible yearning to make up to her for their shortcomings.

"I could not get much idea of the scenery about here tonight as we drove along," I burst out at random, merely with the desire to say something which would lighten the look of depression in the young girl's eyes, "but I should imagine that it must be extremely charming."

To my confusion, all eyes were turned upon me with expressions in which amazement, rage and menace each had its share. Miss Manning, at length, broke the alarming silence which followed upon my speech.

"But did you always come out here in the dark?" she asked, her voice filled with innocent perplexity. "Mr. Cavendish thought that you had been here often before he and Mrs. Bowen came."

I felt a cold sweat rising to my forehead. Cavendish looked as if the hour of his undoing was near at hand, while Mrs. Bowen toyed with her knife in a way which suggested other uses to which it might be put save that of cutting up her food.

"Oh, not always," I stuttered, fastening my eyes upon Miss Manning, and trying to look the calmness which I did not feel. "But your Uncle William and I always had so much business to attend to while I was here that we stuck very closely to the house."

It was a discouraging beginning, but I was not to be wholly depressed, and ventured after another interval of ominous silence to make a timid comment upon an opera of prominence which I had attended a short time before.

It had been a merry thing, but I had no realization that I was becoming hilarious in my description of it, until the man who had presided over my toilet, and who was then acting poorly the character of butler, gave me a prod in the side, as he set a dish before me, which only needed a knife in his fingers to have laid me out upon the floor.

Then, with my eyes opened to the inconsistency of my frivolous talk, when one came to match it with my antiquated garb and the smudgy mask of whiskers which I wore, I could actually sympathize with the anger which menaced me from the eyes of both Cavendish and Mrs. Bowen.

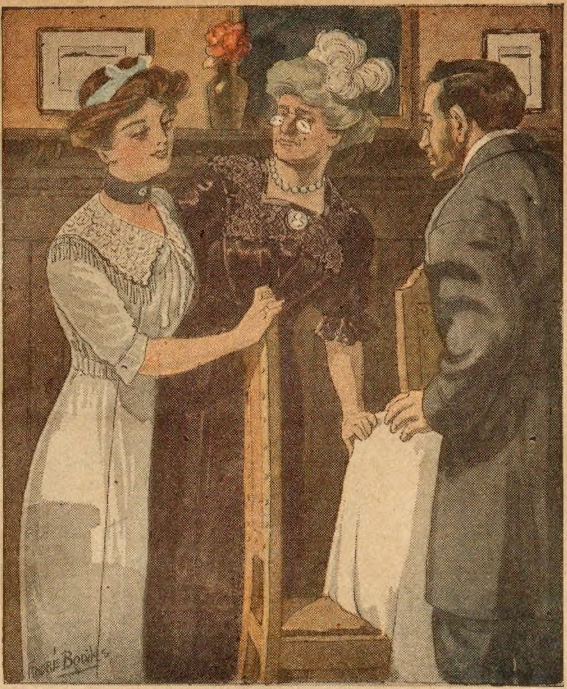
The remainder of dinner was an embarrassing affair. I felt that my life was too valuable to me to toy with fate any longer, as I had been doing each time I had endeavored to stimulate our table talk.

As we rose from the table, Cavendish remarked, with a whiteness about his lips which made me shudder for the rage at me, of which it was doubtless the outer sign, "Well, Hawkins, you had better have a cigar in the library with me, I think. In a little over an hour you and Miss Manning should be upon the road."

CHAPTER IV.

The invitation to smoke sounded humane, but when, after following Cavendish with the hope in my heart that his cigar would be better than his dinner, he had stopped before the door of the room which he motioned me to enter, a muttered speech destroyed any lingering notion on my part that, after all, he meant to act civilized.

"You get in there," he snarled, "and keep that mouth of yours quiet for a while. Curse you, what ill luck made me fall upon you as an assistant?"



It was Miss Manning that made me quail.

"What, indeed?" I could not forbear whispering, just as Miss Manning came hurrying up with a look in her eyes that gave me the dizzy certainty that she did not care to have me leave her sight.

"Do you think, Mr. Hawkins, that you ought to carry the case in your hands?" she asked, with a postively demoralizing inflection of confidence in her voice, but, before I could stammer out a word in reply, Mrs. Bowen, who had been following her with a speed truly marvelous in one of her bulk, uttered a dramatic cry.

"Oh, Miss Manning," she called, folding her hands together like a stage infant at its prayers, "do you know that I have just discovered that that stupid maid has not commenced to pack your luggage? We had better attend to it right away."

I fancied that Miss Manning looked rather frightened at the interruption, as if she half guessed that it really was meant for one, but she did not resist, allowing herself to be led away, after a look into my eyes which made me bless every misfortune of my late outing, every freak of Fate which had placed me in my present predicament, thereby making it possible for me to be of aid to the lovely girl.

Cavendish did not follow me into the library, where I was supposed to do my smoking, but I found there the same fellow who had cheered me in my retirement. I had no mind to invite further impertinence on his part, so, selecting a cigar, I buried myself behind an ancient magazine, and set my brains working upon the hopeless puzzle with which I was surrounded.

An hour of this, during which time my companion appeared to doze, though never, I am sure, was he wholly off his guard, and Cavendish opened the door, calling to me with a clumsy effort at pleasantry, which indicated that some uninitiated person was at his elbow.

"All aboard," he cried, while my jailer shook himself after the manner of an aroused bloodhound. "Miss Manning is getting nervous about the train. I do believe," he added, while a stiff smile bent the corners of his lips, "that she is getting a little tired of us."

She certainly appeared ready to leave the place, and wholly out of keeping with it, as she stood in the open door completely dressed for the drive, even to a stunning little hat, cocked at a most becoming angle over her sunny hair.

I fairly staggered as I rose. The bewilderment of it all, the lateness of the hour, the howling of the wind outside, and the occasional dash of rain against the window, added to the sullen faces of the two men and my knowledge of lurking treachery, almost unmanned me, as I faced the young girl, whose eyes sought mine with an appealing frankness. "Did you get a good rest, Mr. Hawkins?" she asked, with an eager friendliness. "They said that you had fallen asleep over your cigar."

I cast at Cavendish a look which no amount of policy could keep from being one of rage at the deceit practiced upon the girl, but he was not looking in my direction. His whole attention, and what little soul he had, seemed concentrated upon a faded leathern case, which Miss Manning was holding in her hand. Before I had time to wonder what there was about it which so fascinated him, it was thrust into my unwilling grasp.

"Here they are," said Miss Manning, hurriedly. "I told Mr. Cavendish. that I though you had better take charge of them at once."

It seemed, for an instant after the case was in my possession, that Cavendish, Mrs. Bowen, and even the man who had me in charge were about to break through all barriers and tear it from me. The impulse, however, appeared to pass away, and, after a moment of constrained silence, Cavendish moistened his lips and spoke in a voice upon which the roughness of his late savage purpose had left its mark.

"The carriage has driven up," he said. "Miss Manning, Mrs. Bowen has concluded to drive with you to the depot. It is such a lonely drive at this time of night."

There was no mistaking the look of annoyance which replaced the one of eager anticipation with which Miss Miss Manning had just turned toward me as we moved together down the hall. I could not flatter myself that her choice of my society came from any other reason than from my supposed relation to her business affairs, but, slight as was this consolation, it nevertheless gave me a feeling of intense satisfaction. That she should not crave the society of Mrs. Bowen a moment longer than necessity forced it upon her did not astonish me in the least.

"I am sure it is very thoughtful of you," she murmured to the ponderous creature who advanced upon us, bonneted and shawled for the drive, "but surely it is not necessary. Mr. Hawkins can take care of me."

The sting of the sniff with which Mrs. Bowen could not forbear greeting this tribute to my usefulness was entirely lost in my foolish enjoyment of the smile which Miss Manning turned upon me as it passed her lips. I forgot my whiskers and my atrocious dress suit, and smiled back with an enthusiasm which brought a look of dazed confusion into the girl's blue eyes.

At this moment all of our seeming uncertainty was set at rest by Cavendish, who gave a savage and warning jerk at my sleeve, at the same time remarking with a mildnes, which I should have believed impossible for him to assume, that we must waste no more time, or we would surely miss our train. For one instant I faced the menace in his eyes; then I found myself walking out into the darkness of the night, with Mrs. Bowen pressing with deadly familiarity close against my side, while Cavendish, with a sinister gallantry, insisted that he and he alone should have the honor of placing Miss Maning in the carriage.

It was the same carriage in which I had come to the place a few hours since. It was unlighted by so much as single light, and, to my excited imagination, there was about it an air of bloodshed and danger into which it enraged me to see Miss Manning enter.

I could see that Cavendish was trying to get me to one side, but I refused to understand him, and, when at last he gave a violent jerk at my coat, calling, "Oh, I say Hawkins, a moment if you please!" I called back, with a playful malice which I wonder did not earn me a bullet through the back, "Not a moment more, Cavendish, or we will miss our train."

I felt that from now on nothing would tempt me for an instnat to leave Miss Manning's side.

"You fool, give him the case," whispered Mrs. Bowen, so close to my ear that I could feel her breath hot against it and get more than enough of the scent of the hair dressing with which her iron-gray hair seemed reeking, but, at that, the horses started off at a rattling gait, and all else was lost in the sudden sense of delight I felt, as Miss Manning, despite a clear effort on the part of Mrs. Bowen to secure my close companionship, sank down upon the seat beside me. That Mrs. Bowen's disappointment in the matter contained in it nothing of flattery to myself was, of course, clear, but I could feel displeasure, not to say rage, emanating from her very garments?

Miss Manning was trembling. I was conscious of that, even before she reached forth a small hand and clutched me by the arm with nervous force. I, too, was not without my qualms, but everything else sank into insignificance before the exquisite thrill which shot through my veins at the touch of that slender hand. I did not touch it. Such an act would have seemed like profanation, with my heart leaping and bounding as it was, and knowing how perfect must have been her trust in me before she laid such a burden upon my self-restraint.

What moment would it come—that something which was bound to happen? In what form would it come? Well, I could wait there in that pitchy blackness, wait with clenched hands, prepared to defend, if need be, with my last breath that blurred outline at my side, which but a few hours before had come to me from the dim unknown, and now possessed the power to demand a costly sacrifice.

I made no attempt to speak. The most ponderous subjects I could have chosen for conversation would have sounded frivolous in the solemnity of the place and hour, and in painful silence we rocked along. I more than suspected, as we went, that we had never descended, on our way from the village, the hill we now were climbing, and at the foot of which we had made a decided stop.

Whether my companion—I mean by this Miss Manning, for it would take a bold man to mention companionship in connection with Mrs. Bowen—noticed it or not, I could not tell, but, suddenly, without any warning as to her intentions, Mrs. Bowen began to scream. It was not a loud scream; indeed, it semed to me glaringly artificial, but the woman could never have posed as an actress, no matter what her need.

"We are going wrong," she cried, with a sound in her voice of the trained utterance of an evil-tempered parrot. "We are on the wrong road. Call to the man, Mr. Hawkins. He is a new man we hired Mr. Hawkins. He is a new man the road."

I heard my companion give a low cry. She, as I, felt then that the long-dreaded thing had come to pass, but there was no time given me for action before the carriage came to a stop, and the sound of excited voices reached us from without.

Like one acting upon a well-learned cue, Mrs. Bowen threw herself against the carriage door, but seemingly could not get it open. There was a shot, and then some one from the outside began fumbling with the handle, which had apparently resisted all efforts from within.

Now, if ever, I must do something in defense of the girl cowering at my side. Nerved as I was to acts of sublime self-sacrifice, prepared as I was to do or die in vindication of the entrancing confidence with which she seemed to cling to me, imagine my sensations, when the carriage door was opened, and a voice from the darkness asked quietly, "Have you got 'em, captain? If so, we can let these women go."

This capital story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00 and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

A Rival's Revenge.

Eels are the luxury of the East End, in London, and the fishshop stuck up proudly the notice: "We sell eels to the King."

From the opposite side of the road the rival salesman watched his customers diverted to the shop that claimed to supply the royal table with eels. And then, after a week's reflection, he put up the rival notice: "God save the King!"

* * *

Tact is merely the art of getting what you want.

THE DOGE'S DAUGHTER;

Or, THE VAMPIRE OF VENICE

By T. C. HARBAUGH

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CHAPTER IX.

FATHER AND CHILD.

THE beautiful woman on the great staircase which overlooked the banquet hall of the Doge of Venice was enough to thrill the startled banqueters. The Lady Sylva, regal in her rich loveliness, stood erect, with the golden goblet in her uplifted hand, and looked down upon the assemblage. Her startling words still trembled on her coral lips. She was dressed as became the daughter of the great Doge; her raiment glittered with precious gems and on her heaving bosom shone the great white diamond which had been taken in battle from the ferocious Turk.

A strange silence greeted her. Those who had lifted their chalices to drink the toast which she had proposed, paused and regarded her in mingled awe and amazement. The face of Raphael Sforza grew white.

Marino Faliero was the first to get his breath. The Lady Sylva had returned, perhaps from the arms of her English lover, and she was now in sight of all his guests, come perhaps to taunt him with her adoration of the man he hated.

"Who will drink death to the enemies of the great Doge and ruin to the House of the Bat?" repeated the beautiful woman on the staircase.

"Aye," cried Faliero. "Who will drink this toast?"

As he finished, the goblet encircled by Sylva's jeweled hand was raised to her lips. There was a rumble of applause at the table, and goblets clicked and were drained.

Sylva did not move. Her gaze remained fixed on the brilliant scene beneath her. It wandered at last to Sforza. The Duke bit his lip and returned her look. In a few moments he excused himself and withdrew. This seemed the signal for other withdrawals, and at last no one remained at the board but Faliero himself.

He heard the last tread of the last banqueter in the echoing corridor beyond the chamber. He looked up the grand staircase and saw his daughter slowly descend. Her face was pale, but her beauty seemed enhanced by the pallor.

"The last falsifier and traitor is gone!" said the woman. "They drank your health, my lord, even when they hold stilettos at your heart."

"How dare you?"

The words came like poisoned shafts from the Doge's lips.

"The child of the great Doge dares anything," was the reply. "She would be unworthy of her ancestry if she quailed in the face of a rebel."

"But you?" cried Faliero. "Whence come you? From the embraces of the English dog?"

"Nay, from the House of the Bat!"

The Doge's features were illumined by a singular expression.

"I do not understand," and he leaned forward, whilst he steadily gazed into the face before him.

"You have wronged me," spoke Sylva. "I went not from the palace of my own initiative. I was carried away by minions of their master."

"Abducted?" For the first time the features of Faliero softened.

"Hooded by the varlets and taken to a gondola."

"And thence——"

"To the House of the Bat."

"Tell me all."

The Doge folded his arms and stood like a statue in the gleams of the thousand-and-one lights that made the gorgeous hall as brilliant as noonday. The Lady Sylva dropped into a chair and was silent for a moment.

Not a sign of interruption came from Faliero whilst she talked. Everything was told—her abduction from the palace, her incarceration in the House of the Bat, the appearance of the vampire, her escape and return to the ducal palace. The story lost nothing in the telling, as the words escaped the narrator's lips, and when she had finished she leaned forward, filled a goblet with Andalusian wine, and drank it off.

"You stun me," said the Doge. "It is marvelous. Who is this creature, for man he must be, who masquerades in that hideous garb? Where is this infamous house?"

"I saw but little of it," replied Sylva, "for I was hooded till I reached the gorgeous chamber where the vampire confronted me."

"No sign of identity in the room where you were?"

"None."

"And the maid Flamma would not reveal the identity of her master?"

"In that regard she was silent as the Sphinx."

"But why——" he came forward until he stood directly over his daughter and transfixed her with his penetrating gaze—"but why, my child, did you include in your toast tonight the destruction of the House of the Bat, when my guests were ignorant of its existence?"

The Lady Sylva smiled.

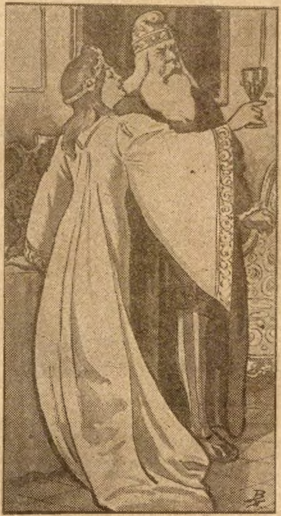
"Think you," said she, "that some noble of Venice is not connected with this den of mystery, and that he does not on certain occasions become a vampire in word and deed?"

But you singled out no one."

"Aha! Then you did not see one of your noble guests start and loose color?"

"I saw nothing of the kind, child."

"Nay," for my appearance was startling enough to demand your whole attention."



"Long life and glory to Marino Faliero!"

"You are speaking in riddles," was the reply. "Which of my guests paled when you named the House of the Bat?"

"The haughtiest one who drank the ducal wine tonight."

"Sforza?"

"Aye, my Lord, the richest duke in Venice—the man who is said to be of the Ten."

Marino Faliero recoiled, and watched by Sylva, took a hasty turn about the room, coming back to her with a flushed face.

"Let us dismiss these suspicions for the present," he said. "It is of another matter I would speak. You still persist in loving against my commands?"

The next instant she was on her feet, with her matchless figure drawn to its full height and her face as red as the roses that bloomed in the ducal gardens.

"Love, my father, obeys but the command of one's own heart," she answered, in her rich, melodious voice. "Love is the same everywhere, in camp, bower and palace."

"But you are the daughter of Faliero. You love Venice as you love your mother's memory, Heaven rest her."

"I do."

"You have given your heart to one who comes from a country which is the Republic's secret foe. You must give up this Englishman, or forever have torn from Faliero's heart the thought that he ever had a daughter."

"But, my father, he is worthy the love even of Faliero's child!" came from her throat, in tones of pleading. "Leon Vincent is as brave as the bravest man who ever upheld the honor of Venice. Would you cast me at the feet of one whom I could never love, because that person is Venetian?"

Faliero looked deep into the brilliant orbs whose light was centered upon his face.

"I will not, cannot sanction this love for the English dog?" he exclaimed. "Where is he?"

Lady Sylva was silent.

"You know where he hides," the Doge went on, in unabated anger. "Perhaps you have concealed him from my minions. Have a care, my child! I can strip you of your rank, and proclaim that you are no longer the child of Marino Faliero."

"But you cannot deprive me of the boast that I am a daughter of the great Republic!"

He looked at her as she refilled a goblet and went toward the grand staircase, her feet giving out a tinkling sound on the polished metal floor. She ascended the stair till she stood on the step from which she had lately thrown the startling toast into the teeth of her father's guests.

"Drink to me!" she exclaimed, looking down upon the haughty figure at the table. "For the last time, perhaps, let this chamber ring with the words of Faliero's child."

The Doge set his teeth hard, as he mechanically filled a chased goblet and looked at his daughter in the garish light. The Lady Sylva swung her glass above her head and her voice seemed to reach to the farthest recesses of the lofty hall.

"Long life and glory to Marino Faliero, greatest of the doges, and ruin and destruction to any one who lifts a hand against his sacred person!"

The Doge drank in silence, looking over the rim of his vessel at the beautiful vision on the staircase, and as Lady Sylva's last words died away, she cast the empty chalice at her feet, and went up the broad steps with the haughtiness of an unconquered queen.

Marino Faliero sank into a chair with a groan.

CHAPTER X.

THE STRANGE DUEL.

We left Leon Vincent, the young Englishman, as the reader will recollect, in the strange apartment to which he had been carried after his capture in the Lagoon by the unknown gondola.

He might have cherished hopes of escape, notwithstanding his imprisonment, if the lion which had been set to guard him had not appeared. He was forced to face this tawny king of the jungles, unarmed, and therefore helpless. His flight from the little house with the iron door, through the appearance of the two bravos who had entered for the purpose of plunder, only to get into the toils, had ended in more danger. In all his buffeting about the world, he had never experienced an adventure like this, and in his reflections he wondered why his captor had exhibited joy over his success.

For some time the lion eyed him as though he would have liked to hurl himself upon him, but all at once the animal retreated across the chamber, and, squatting on his haunches, appeared to fall asleep. But Vincent knew that the king of beasts, sure of his powers to obey his master, had relaxed none of his vigilance.

Several hours elapsed before a sound broke the silence that hung heavily in the room. The lion turned his head toward the door, which opened slowly, and the same apparition which, on another occasion, had confronted Sylva stalked forward.

The Vampire of Venice stood before Vincent. The latter was induced to smiled at the strange object, for he doubted not that a human being was masquerading in the bat's skin, but merriment was promptly chased away when he remembered that Venice was a city of danger and mystery, and that he was in the presence of no ordinary being.

Eye met eye for some time. The orbs behind the dark gray skin of the vampire seemed to scintillate with triumph, and Vincent returned the look with all the composure at his command.

"You have no thanks for your rescue?" said the thing. "Methinks one who has been dragged from the death embrace of the Lagoon should voice his thankfulness."

Vincent tossed his head haughtily. "In the first place," returned he, "I don't know whom to thank. I am not accustomed to thanking bats for favors and then——"

"Just as you please," was the interruption. "You Englishmen are thankless creatures at the best."

"But not afraid to meet any enemy, even on his own ground."

"Ha! I see your feathers have not been clipped," was the laughing response. "You do not mean that you would fight the Vampire of Venice?"

"You can take my words as a challenge if you wish," said Vincent, only hoping that the vampire would toss a weapon at his feet. "You see I am helpless here."

The man-bat turned as if to issue a command, but as suddenly he again whirled upon the prisoner.

"A truce to badinage!" cried he, as the littl eyes glittered. "I will put you to the test, my noble Englishman. You shall fight, but Leo yonder shall be your adversary."

Vincent's gaze roved to the couchant lion, which seemed to understand his strange master. The vampire turned to the door.

"Cosmo!" he called.

Almost instantly the portal swung ajar, and a true Venetian face appeared.

"A sword, Cosmo."

The varlet vanished, but soon returned with a straight sword with an iron handle which the man-bat took and handed to Vincent.

"It's a good blade, one taken from the Genoese in fair fight," said he. "You have the steel, Leo but tooth and claw."

The vampire stepped to the farthest corner of the great apartment and folded his arms. The bat's wings rested at his sides.

Vincent clutched the iron hilt with eagerness.

"One moment!" said the vampire. "Ere you fight the lion, tell me whether you have given up the Doge's daughter."

"What? Given up the Lady Sylva? You have lost your reason, or you take Leon Vincent to be a fool."

"You will not give her up, then?"

"Not for all the wealth of Venice!"

"Nor for liberty, without a combat with the king of the African plains?"

"I will buy no freedom by relinquishing my love for the Doge's daughter."

"Then," cried the man-bat, with a hurried glance at the lion, "you shall buy it, if at all, by combat."

He spoke harshly to the beast. In an instant the animal sprang erect, with his eyes aflame and fixed upon Vincent. The vampire waved his hand.

"At him, Leo!" he commanded, and before the words had finally left his lips, the beast sprang forward and crouched in front of Vincent, almost within reach of his sword arm.

"There are no rules in this combat," he went on. "It shall be give and take to the death."

The beauty of the lion appealed to Vincent, who was a lover of nature. Never had he seen such a royal member of this species, and he had seen lions in more than part of the world. This one was large and supple, every outline was grace itself, and when he opened his mouth, Vincent saw the ivory teeth which perchance had torn more than one victim of the man-bat.

All at once the lion sprang from his crouching attitude, and Vincent threw up the sword in guard. If the animal should leap he resolved that he would thrust the blade straight into his heart, and he doubted not that the steel would be true.

Suddenly the lion began to circle about his prey. How velvety were his strides, and how gracefully he moved, all the time keeping his gaze riveted upon the Briton.

"Now, Leo, now!" It was the vampire who spoke.

That moment the lion leaped forward. His spring would have carried him against Vincent, if the sharp steel had not caused him to recoil with a dull roar of rage. The point of the Englishman's sword had pricked the neck, but had not entered. Leo cast a look at his master, whose face had suddenly acquired a cloud of gloom.

"Coward!" he cried to the lion. "You should fight a fisher-woman and not a man. Coward, I say!"

The tawny beast replied with a growl, and threw himself on the floor before Vincent. He was not there long. Suddenly he leaped up and went straight through the air at his foe.

Quick as Leo was, Vincent was quicker. The lion met the point of the Genoese blade at it was propelled by a hand eager to finish the duel. This time it was more than a mere scratch for the shining steel went through hide and flesh as though they were paper, and the huge animal fell back and writhed on the floor.

A bitter oath leaped from the man-bat's throat.

"Peste!" he cried. "Up, Leo, or to the waters of the Lagoon you go, bound like a slave!"

For the first time the lion did not respond. His glazing eyes turned to his master in helpless pleading and pity. Vincent, still holding the sword, saw that never again would the beast face his master's victim.

The vampire stamped in his rage. He strode suddenly to where the lion lay and looked down upon him. He saw the last quiver, noted the last breath, and then wheeled upon Vincent.

"You've fought wild beasts before?" cried he.

"Never, sir," replied Vincent calmly.

"The lion is dead."

"And the death of the noble beast is upon your head, not upon mine."

The Vampire of Venice turned toward the door. Was he going to summon a second lion? Vincent waited.

The man who entered at his master's command stared at the great yellowish body on the floor.

"Take the beast away," cried the man-bat, and Vincent watched the stalwart Venetian drag the carcass from the chamber.

"By my troth, I like you!" cried the vampire, turning upon the Englishman. "You should be a Venetian, not a British subject. Swear to me that you will relinquish all claims to the Lady Sylva's love, and the door yonder will be open to you."

"You know me not," said Vincent. "If you seek the love of the beautiful Faliero, bring a sword, and we will fight fairly for it."

"Not on your life, Englishman," was the answer.

"Then," cried Vincent, as he bounded forward, "I'll rid Venice of her vampire and walk over him to Lady Sylva's heart!"

His sword, flecked with the warm blood of the lion, flashed before his eager eyes. The blade was lunging toward the man-bat's throat, when, at a cry from him, the wall behind Vincent parted with a snap, and into the chamber darted five men, armed cap-a-pie.

The Vampire of Venice leaned against the opposite wall and laughed.

CHAPTER XI.
THE BLACK GONDOLA.

But for the coming of tne minions of the Vampire of Venice, Vincent would have made quick work of that person, as his sword point was at his unguarded throat.

Realizing that he was overmatched, for the bravos were fully armed, there was nothing for the young Englishman to do but to submit. This he did with the best grace he could assume, and when the vampire and his men left the scene of the duel with the lion, Sylva's lover was still in merciless hands.

He knew nothing of the Lady Sylva's abduction, nor of her subsequent adventures. Had he known, he would have chafed more than ever under confinement. He doubted not that he had fallen into the power of one of the most desperate men in Venice, and his surroundings told him that his enemy was one of the dukes of the Republic.

Not long after the events we have just recorded, a gondola might have been seen slipping through the waters of the Lagoon. It was a craft known only too well to the citizens of the Venetian domain. Its color was black, and this had given it the name of the Black Gondola. Its gondolier wore a mask as dark as the sides of the craft, and report said that no one ever saw his face.

Fear struck to the hearts of hundreds whenever this barge was seen on the water, for it was said to belong to the Council of Ten, and that its secrets were too terrible for audible mention.

The Black Gondola pursued its course until it came abreast of a stately palace, when it drew to shore, and a man got out and went up the marble staircase. He was a person of fifty, tall and handsome, with a face as pale as that of the sheeted dead.

A door opened at his signal, and he entered the palace. Treading a long corridor lighted with rich lamps, he entered a room hung in deepest black, and proceeded to array himself in somber garments, after which he masked his face and seated himself in a throne-like chair on a raised dais.

Presently a door swung open, and nine figures garbed like the man solemnly entered and seated themselves in a semicircle about their chief. This was the famous Ten.

The head of the Order made a sign and one of the nine rose and bowed.

"What has my lord to report?" asked the chief.

"The conspiracy for the safety of the Republic advances. Marino Faliero still conspires to wrench liberty from the Venetians."

A murmur of rage went round the seated group.

"He has been warned:"

"Yea, master. The stiletto has been buried in his portrait, and his initials have been written in blood within the ducal palace."

"It is well."

"He has given his birthday fete and boasted of his power."

"Woe to the traitor Doge!" cried the whole assemblage.

"Bring in the prisoner!"

One of the Ten crossed the chamber and rapped on the iron door. It opened to admit two masked men, who dragged a young girl after them, and she recoiled and shrieked when her eyes fell upon her judges.

"Face your accusers, wench!" cried the chief of the Ten.

Fiamma, for the prisoner was the maid with whom Lady Sylva had exchanged clothes, managed to draw herself to her true height, and her courage seemed to return.

"You have aided the enemies of the Republic," said the chief, solemnly.

"What more could one do when a stiletto is at one's bosom?" exclaimed Fiamma.

"One can die," was the merciless retort.

Fiamma breathed hard.

"Is this your defense, traitress?"

"I can say no more."

A deep silence followed Fiamma's answer.

"What is the judgment of the Ten?" and the dark eyes of the speaker roved round the circle.

The answer was but one word:

"Death!"

Fiamma started back and would have fallen, had not one of the guards steadied her. Her piercing cry rang through the chamber, but it got no farther than the thick walls.

"Death!" repeated the chief of the Ten, "but of what nature?"

The Black Gondola!"

"Away with her!"

Fiamma was siezed by her escort and hurried toward the door.

"Let me speak," she cried, struggling in the grasp of the men. "Let me have a word ere I perish."

The eyes behind the head mask took on a serpentine glitter.

"You can speak, doomed one," was the reply.

Fiamma was released, and she sprang forward to a spot directly in front of the chief of the Ten.

"You doom me at the beck of my master!" she cried. "You kill me because of Raphael Sforza's hatred. This wretch whom I have served—I, a captive of war—hates me, because through me a fly has escaped from his web. May he burn through endless cycles in perdition! I prophesy that some day he will meet the doom he deserves. All his secrets are not his alone. I have penetrated some of them, and I know that when he is not Raphael Sforza he is the Vampire of Venice. He hides his face behind the mask of the bat, and he wears the disgusting wings of that horrible creature. You have doomed me at his command. But ere you take me to the Black Gondola, wnich is death itself, I will at least carry with me to the unseen world one of the head demons of the Republic!"

In another instant Fiamma, drawing from beneath her garment a glittering stiletto, leaped forward straight at the chief of the Ten, and before she could be arrested was upon the dais.

"It is you whom I will take with me to the shades!" her voice rang out in clear accents. "It is you, demon of Venice, who shall precede Fiamma to the world of night and death!"

Instantly confusion reigned in the Hall of the Ten. The dazed chief, clutched by the hands of the infuriated victim, was forced back in his chair, and Fiamma was striking with her steel, whilst the man tried to escape the doom she would inflict.

"There!" cried the girl, when she was pulled back as her enemy toppled from his seat. "One demon will march before the maid of Cyprus across the plains of death!"

She was thrown across the room, while half a dozen men sprang to the assistance of their chief.

"To the Black Gondola with her!" rang through the vaulted chamber of doom.

The maid of Cyprus was jerked to her feet, and while she laughed to see her victim groveling on the floor, she was hustled from the room by strong hands.

"Down the staircase with her!" roared out the human lions.

The girl was borne from the palace and thrown into the Black Gondola. The masked boatman seized his paddles, and the craft shot out into the middle of the Lagoon. Overhead the stars showered their golden light upon this exciting scene, and the breath of the Adriatic stole softly over all.

The gondola slipped through the water like a thing of life and glided away. Fiamma lay on the soft cushions within the palanquin-like structure on the deck. Her face was white, but her dark brown eyes shone with triumph. On, on went the death gondola. It seemed to be headed for the Adriatic, and soon it shot into a narrow strait.

A man who was seated near the victim of the Ten watched her constantly. At length he stirred and approached her. The gondolier at his post saw nothing of this movement.

"Canst swim, girl?" he asked, as he bent over the fair prisoner.

Fiamma searched his face with her gaze and nodded her head.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I am Bosco Madani, taken from my home by the warriors of the Republic."

"But the tool of the Ten:' said Fiamma, scornfully.

"One will serve most any master when death threatens."

"I understand," and Fiamma's gaze fell.

"Not a hundred yards away is a small island," continued Madani. "The gondolier is at his post. I will drop you noiselessly into the water, and then may the gods take care of you."

Fiamma was thrilled in every fiber of of her frame by these words. Madani picked her up and pushed aside the black curtains of the gondola. In another moment Fiamma fell gently into the water, and the gondola moved on. Presently something struck the surface of the strait with a sound which caused the gondolier to turn his head. A figure slipped to his side.

"'Tis done!" Madani whispered. "The commands of the Ten have been obeyed."

The gondolier smiled, and the Black Gondola turned and darted back toward the city.

CHAPTER XII.
THE HUNT FOR VINCENT.

It was not long before the Doge's daughter made the discovery that the house of the little iron door was no longer tenanted by Leon Vincent. What had become of the brave Englishman she did not know, but she set Beppo, the dwarf, on the trail. The atom of cunning was difficult to match. Thoroughly devoted to his beautiful mistress, he plunged into the new mission heart and soul.

His acumen soon met with results, for he learned that two bravos had invaded the house, and that, after a fierce combat, Pisano had been tumbled down the staircase by a thrust from Vincent's sword, whilst Ludovic had been hurled from the window and was found crushed on the stones below.

Vincent must have escaped from the house, but Beppo could not determine why. The capture of the Englishman by the owner of the gondola and his subsequent imprisonment in the place where he had encountered the lion, was a chapter that was withheld from the dwarf.

For all this Beppo did not relinquish his hunt. If Vincent was in Venice and alive, he would find him, for Lady Sylva was distraught, though she had returned to the ducal palace. She could have set no better hound on the trail than Beppo.

It was the night after Vincent's adventure that the drawf entered a drinking resort near the banks of the Lagoon. He knew that it was frequented by bravos and the retainers of the nobles of Venice, and he hoped by using his ears to pick up something that would reward him for his trouble.

Seated near the table at which he took a seat were three men who were making merry over their cheap wine. They were a degree removed from the bravo, as was apparent by their garb, and Beppo soon discovered that one of them was attached to the palace of Raphael Sforza.

"You should have seen us comrades," laughed this fellow, who was none other than Cosmo. "I never saw one so hard to handle. The Englishman has an arm of iron. He can handle a sword like a gladiator. He put Leo, the lion, out of commission in a manner that would have done credit to my master, and he is one of the best swordsmen in Venice."

"What has become of the obstreperous Briton?" asked one of the other.

Cosmo grinned.

"You don't think we set him free?" he chuckled. "You don't dream that my master enrolled him in his bodyguard, and gave him a medal for his prowess?"

"We don't deem Duke Raphael such a fool as all that."

"I should think not," smiled Cosmo, as he drained his glass. "We have watchful eyes on the Englishman."

"The Lagoon keeps its secrets," significantly suggested one of the listening pair.

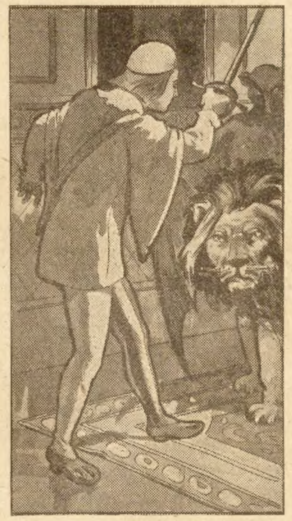
"Aye, that it does, comrades."

Master Beppo waited to hear no more. Stealing forth, he looked up at the vaulted azure and grinned.

Vincent in Sforza's grip! The thought thrilled him. The human atom drew his poinard and felt its point. There was none better in the Republic. Another instant, and he was bounding away with his eyes aflash with eagerness and his feet shod like those of the fabled Mercury.

Half an hour later a shape wondrously like Beppo might have been seen crouched on the broad stairway which led from the Lagoon to the door of the Sforza palace. He resembled a toad on the watch, for he hugged the shadows whilst he regarded the stately pile which rose above him. How to get inside was puzzling Beppo. He was confident of taking care of himself if he could once get beyond the doors.

A gondola came to the foot of the staircase and stopped. Beppo saw the door open above, as a man came out. The dwarf saw that this person was Sforza, whom Fiamma had accused before the Ten as being the Vampire of Venice. The Duke was richly clad, and as he descended the fight, Beppo contracted his body still more and watched him with bated breath. Sforza went straight to the covered deck of the gondola, and soon the craft was shooting through the starlit water like a great bird.



"At him, Leo."

Up the steps went Lady Sylva's man.

The great door was immovable, as he thought, but there was a niche alongside into which the little Venetian thrust his body and waited like a cat at a mouse's hole. He had patience as well as courage.

At length the door swung open, as though to confirm the saying that everything comes to him who waits. Two men came forth and paused within arm's reach of Beppo. The door had not been closed.

"We'll die here without pleasure," said one of the pair. "Look, Pablo, yonder are the lights of the Lion's Lair. Our comrades await us there."

The one addressed leaned forward and sent his gaze over his companion's outstretched arm. That instant there was a quick movement behind the men. Something shot into the palace and was lost among the shadows of a corridor. The portal swung to with a clang and the menials went down the staircase.

Beppo rose to his feet from a darkened niche and sped away. The palace seemed deserted, but his good sense told him that it was still inhabited by Sforza's men. Fortunate would he be if he was not pounched upon at any moment and dragged away, perhaps with a dagger in his back. If Vincent was a prisoner in the palace where could he find him?

At last he came out upon a marble square where the light lay with Oriental softness. As his eye roved around he discovered something in one corner which resembled the half-recumbent figure of a man. Out came the dwarf's stiletto, and he glided around the wall toward the form.

The guard, perhaps heavy with wine, was asleep. His weapons had fallen from his hands and his head reposed on his chin. The lynx-like eyes of Beppo glittered. He turned from the guard and plunged into a corridor which led to the right.

Midway down the hall he was startled by a shriek, and a woman fell against the wall and gasped. Beppo ground his teeth in rage. There was a bound without a cry, and his hand was on the creature's arm before she could cry out again. She looked into the dwarf's face and shivered.

"Silence!" commanded Beppo, in whispers. "Where is the Duke's prisoner?"

The woman shook her head and retreated the full length of the dwarf's arm.

"You know. You are——"

"I am only Leeza," was the interruption. "For the love of Heaven, spare me!"

"To the prison!" cried Beppo. "Quick!"

He pushed her down the corridor, his fingers seeming to eat their way to her bones. A strange light suddenly shot up in the woman's eyes.

"Would you really find Duke Raphael's prisoner?" she asked, looking up into Beppo's face.

"I would find no other," was the reply.

"But you would make me traitress to Duke Raphael."

"I can keep a secret," said the dwarf. "Show me the prison of Vincent, the Englishmam."

"Come, then."

He did not relax his grip on the woman's arm. If she betrayed him—he did not finish the thought."

With all his cunning Beppo could not see that his captive was simulating. She was playing a game as cool as any one had ever played.

"Who are you?" she suddenly asked.

"Never mind," answered Beppo. "I shall be nameless to you."

"Who sent you for the prisoner?"

He jerked Leeza rudely.

"Is it to be the door or the stiletto?" he hissed. He was losing his patience.

"It shall be the door."

"Good, my fair one!" though the woman was not struck by beauty. "I shall make verses to your eyebrows and sing to your rosy cheeks."

"Yonder," was the retort, and the woman pointed to a door which was near. They had descended to the lower floor of the palace where the light was not so strong and the silence almost palpable.

"You have the key?" said Beppo.

The woman lifted a bunch of keys from her girdle, and the dwarf nodded his head. They were at the door.

"Open!" commanded Beppo.

"You are brave, signor."

"I am no coward," cried Beppo.

"You are willing to enter?"

"I would enter the pit of fire for my lady's lover!"

With a grim smile on her lips the woman thrust one of the keys into the lock.

"It is a heavy door," he said, looking into the drawf's face.

Beppo came to her assistance and pulled and portal open. The next second he was pushed inside, with a triumphant laugh.

"To your doom, fool!" shrieked Leeza. "It is Duke Raphael's menagerie!"

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

Simply Carried Away.

"I understand you were out in Kansas on your last vacation. How did you like that country?"

"Well, there was one town there I shall never forget to my dying day. We were simply carried away with it."

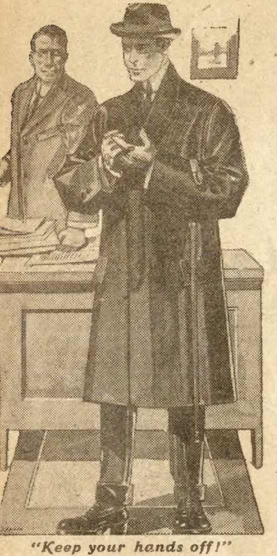
"You don't say so? What could have been the special attraction?"

"Well, I would hardly call it an attraction. You see, there was a cyclone arrived about half an hour after we did."

SNARING MAIDEN FEET;

Or, RUTH HOLME'S STRUGGLE

By ALFRED B. TOZER



"Keep your hands off!"

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CHAPTER XI.

THE "ONLY GIRL" COMBINATION.

RUTH awoke with a quiver of alarm and lay for an instant listening, trembling at the sound of impatient knocking on the door of her room. Gaining courage, then, she looked at the one window, the lower sash of which was lifted a few inches in the interest of purer air than the apartment usually afforded, thinking it might be a call to breakfast.

But it was still dark, save for the street lights, outside the panes. While she looked and listened, a clock somewhere in the house struck three. She arose and walked softly to the door, outside of which a subdued whispering was now heard.

"What is it?" she asked, dreading to hear the gruff voice of an officer in reply.

Her short experience with the police had taught her to avoid and fear them. The brutality of the men who had taken her to the Shannon street station seemed to her a common quality in the members of the force.

She was conscious of no wrong-doing, yet she shrank from the thought of again standing in the presence of a uniformed officer. In her innocence she did not know but that she had committed a crime in running away from the protection of the woman to whose care the police matron had committed her; yet she felt no remorse for the act, as she stood at the door awating an answer.

"It is Nellie," the answer came, at last, after a minute of whispering. "Wake up. We've had a time getting you out. Here's two friends of mine with a job for you."

Ruth began opening the door, but hesitated, as a man came down the hall and stood for a moment nearly opposite her room.

"Hello, Mike!" one of the girls said. "Lost in the big town?"

"Just getting in," the plain clothes man replied. "Got a room here, you know."

"Since last night, then," Nellie's voice said. "You police guys make me sick!" the girl went on. "Whatd'ye want skulking about here?"

"I might ask what you kids are doing up at this time of night," the officer said, half laughingly, half apologetically. "Why don't you go to bed?"

"What's it to you?" demanded Jean. "Beat it!"

"Oh, wait," Nellie said. "Mike isn't so worse. He's only working his tin star overtime after a girl there's a bunch of reward money on. Mike is all right, girls, but he won't do in the Nicholas Carter role. Pass on, old sleuth.!"

"If you don't mind," Mike said, sternly, "I'd like to have a look at the girl you're hiding in that room."

"Hiding nothing!" retorted Jean. "That's Nellie's cousin, from Wisconsin, and she's going out on the cinders with us. Company leaves the Union Depot in an hour. Now, run along and sell your papers."

"Just the same," Mike insisted, "I'm going to have a look at her as she passes out. I know you girls are going out with the 'Only Girl' combination, but this kid is a new one on me. There's a girl we're looking for, and she——"

"Look here, Mike Schobey," Nellie burst out, "you know me. We don't need no introduction to each other. You're crooked, and I know it, and you know that I know it. You got the run from Theater alley for being color blind, and not being able to tell which things were yours and which belonged to my boss, the manager. If you're 'dotty' on this new girl, come and see her in the parlor in daylight, and don't go sneaking about the house at night. If you do, I'll put you on the 'hummer' for fair."

"That's right, Nellie," Ruth heard the girl who had been called Jean say. "Give him all that's coming to him."

"Of course, if you say the girl in there is your cousin, and not the one I'm after, it's all right," Mike said, mildly, "and there ain't no use of your getting lofty about it, either. But if she's what you say, why don't you let me talk with her?"

"Mike Schobey," Jean cried out, "if you're still standing there in half a minute, I'll scream and pull off a stunt that will bring you before the trial board, and these girl will back me up—what?"

Ruth heard the officer mumble some reply and go slowly down the hall, but had her doubts as to whether, angry as he must be, he would accept of defeat and give up the search. She unlocked the door, and the three girls flocked in, Nellie looking flushed and angry.

"Some one ought to push his face in," she said, sitting down on the edge of the bed. "He's too gay with his tin star."

"He won't go away," said Jean.

"Yes, he will," Nellie insisted. "He knows the boss wants only a word to put up a yell against him. The manager loves Mike Schobey—not."

"What is it about?" asked Ruth, shivering in the cold room.

"Just as long as you stay here," Nellie went on, "you'll be pursued and chased from place to place by the 'flatties.' They've got a fool notion you're this Ruth Holme the papers are talking about, and they won't ever quit.

"Now, you keep quiet while I tell you about it," Nellie went on, as Ruth flushed and paled and opened her mouth to speak. "We don't care whether you're Ruth Holme or not," she continued, with a quick glance at the others. "That ain't in our lines. If you should tell us you were, we wouldn't believe it. So you just get into your duds and we'll give these guys a chase for their money."

"I don't understand," Ruth said, believing all that was said to her, and seeing only kindness and loyalty in the faces of the three girls. "Where are you going to take me?"

"You're goin' on the stoige!" the third member of the party said. "You're goin' to set out tonight on a cart that will land you on good old Broadway, with your name in electric letters six feet high."

"Don't frighten the girl, Jennie," Jean said. "Let her catch her breath."

Indeed, it seemed to take a long time for the bewildered girl to "catch her breath." Her eyes opened wider as she looked from face to face. Going on the stage?"

Her knowledge of the drama was limited to careful and appreciative readings of the standard dramatists. Half a dozen times, perhaps, she had visited a theater in company with her father, but that was when they first arrived in the city. On such occasions she had not fully approved of all that was presented on the stage. The training bestowed by her father, in the old house on the coast of Maine, had not included the artificialities of life—the mimic world of the stage was far away from the daily life on the wild seashore.

She had no knowledge whatever of the life lived by the people who earned their bread and butter behind the big curtains. She could not understand, yet, that they lived quite apart from the world she knew, and had little superstitions and beliefs of their own—even a language that was not at all like the language she had heard spoken since childhood.

"Let the kid alone," Nellie commanded. "She's not going on the stage if she doesn't want to. Too conspicuous for her, anyway. She's going to be dresser for you two bum actorettes. Now, get ready in a hurry, kiddo," she added, turning to Ruth, "for the choo-choos don't wait for any old barn-storming push of ten, twent', thirt' hams. Get going, you girls."

Nellie, perhaps, saw that Ruth was anxious to say many things by way of thanks for the loyalty the girl who had so strangely befriended her, and she was afraid she might say too much once she found her tongue, so she made a great bustle of preparation and presently shooed the three out of the room with a great show of anxiety concerning the train they were to take.

Ruth, hustled almost rudely away, looked back from the steep staircase to see Nellie looking down upon her with something like regret at the parting in her face. Her eyes were not dry as she waved a farewell from the landing. Nellie replied with an odd choke in her voice, and then the door of her room closed.

It was still night when the girls passed through the city to the station. There were street lights flickering along the way, and in the shadows of the alleys were slouching figures seeking shelter from the watchful eyes of patrolmen. There was great bustle and confusion at the station, but finally the members of the "Only Girl" combination met in a stuffy day coach and the journey commenced.

The journey was like a dream to the young girl. Her two friends turned a seat so as to face her, and did their best by careful talk to help her out of her lonely mood, but her thoughts were not of a cheerful sort, and so she shrank from conversation.

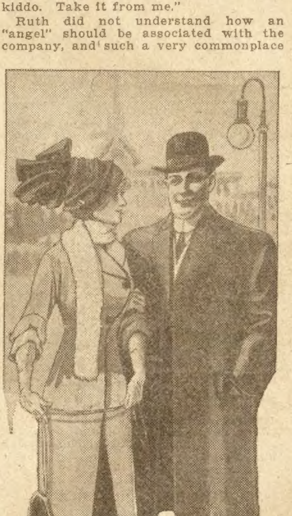
The journey seemed like a flight. It seemed, too, that she was deserting her father, sick and alone in an unknown hospital. Still, her memory of that night at the police station urged her on, and made every mile the wheels rattled out of the rails a barrier between herself and something she feared, unreasonably, but with a fear like nothing she had ever experienced before.

She attempted no acquaintance with the other members of the company, and the girls who were responsible for her being there offered no introduction. Most of the members of the company were busy studying their lines, and now and then the star—tall, dignified, anxious—passed down the aisle, asking questions and suggesting technical changes which Ruth could not at all understand.

"That luminary," Jean said, in an undertone, as the actor passed her seat, "better get back to his hay. These kids won't think no more of him for mixing with them. Most of this bunch needs an ax instead of friendly tips. Believe me!"

"He's his own angel as well as his own star," Jennie cut in, "an' he's lookin' f'r the Broadway talent. He thinks we'll put up a show like Hank Irving and Ellen Terry. Not f'r twent' a week, kiddo. Take it from me."

Ruth did not understand how an "angel" should be associated with the company, and such a very commonplace "angel" at that, and, observing her look of wonder, Jean explained.



"You're a frost, all right."

"The 'angel'," she went on, "is the custodian of the roll. This guy has a bankroll that he has to watch from getting under the wheels. It would tip the train over. He thinks he can act, and is backing himself with that massive aggregation of yellows ones. We want to quit him with the last week's mazuma in our kicks, for it will be a long way from the white lights when he takes to the ties."

"Do you think he'll lose his money?" asked Ruth, feeling a sudden sympathy for the actor-manager-star.

"Sure t'ing," Jennie answered. "He won't be able to lease enough of an opera house to pick his teet' wit' in a month. Such a nice, fair-haired boy, too!"

"Oh, well," Jean cut in, seeing the sympathy in Ruth's face, "he may be able to pull it through. There's no knowing what sort of 'bunk' the 'rubes' will fall for. Anyway, kiddie, you don't have to act with him. You'll hover over our wardrobes in the caravansary while we chew up the scenery. Now flop, and you'll feel better."

Ruth did not know what it was to "flop," but Jean put a cloak under her head and threw another over her shoulders, so she closed her eyes and soon dropped into a light sleep. When she awoke it was daylight, and the train was pulling in at a station and a man with unnecessarily long arms was ringing a bell on a platform.

The girls, most of them, at least, rushed out of the coach and raided the lunch counter, in sight, through a large window, from the seat occupied by Ruth. Jean and Jennie went out with the others, and Ruth saw them standing at the counter, munching sandwiches and sipping steaming coffee.

The coach was now nearly empty, only two seats near the front being accupied. The passengers there were three members of the company, two woman and a girl. Instead of visiting the counter, they opened baskets, spread a newspaper over their laps and began eating. Finally one of the party—a slender, bright-faced girl of fourteen, dressed in gaudy colors and wearing her wide-rimmed hat far on the back of her brown head—bounced out on the platform and returned with a couple of quarts of coffee.

"Coffee!" she cried. "Last call f'r dinner in th' dinin' car! Drink, pretty creature, drink!" she added, pouring a steaming cup of the liquid for Ruth.

"You are kind," Ruth said, "but my friends will bring me something."

"You're one of the 'Only Girls'?" asked the child, and then, without waiting for a reply, hurried on. " So'm I. You wouldn't think it, kiddo, but I can go some when it comes to foot work. I'm in the front line, and I dance until thunders of applause reverbrate through the house!"

She smiled wearily as she said this, and bounced down into the seat beside Ruth. Then the girl saw that the child's face was marked with lines of anxiety.

"I saw that in a newspaper," she said, in a moment. "The man that wrote it called me a child wonder, too. My name's Ethel. That's me mother an' sister there in front. They're with the 'Only Girl,' too, but they both say we'll have to walk back. I don't care if we do, do you?"

As a matter of fact, Ruth did not specially care what became of her just then, but she answered that it wouldn't be very convenient to walk back, and then fell into a perfunctory conversation with the girl, who seemed to have taken a great interest in her.

"Say," Ethel said, as the people came streaming out of the diningroom, "when I was out there a man pointed you out to me and asked if you belonged. I guess he was spoons on you."

Ruth looked up to see Jean and Jennie standing by her seat, their hands full of paper bags containing sandwiches, cakes, pies and fruit. In one hand Jean carried a pitcher of coffee.

"Who was it that asked you that, kid?" Jean asked the little one.

Ethel looked out of the car window and pointed.

"That guy there by the door," she replied.

Ruth gave a shiver of fright as she recognized the man pointed out as the one who had questioned Nellie in the restaurant the night before. She did not know that he was also the plain clothes man Nellie had bluffed away from her door that morning, but she could not have been more ill at ease if she had known.

Jean and Jennie exchanged significant glances. Ruth watched until the wheels of the train were bumping over the track-joints, and then saw the man leave the door and make a dash for the train.

"He's comin' on board," Jennie said, with a drawing of her eyes. "He's followin' this kid of ours, an' we won't do a thing to him. Believe me!"

Ethel opened her pretty eyes wider and glanced at the shaking girl.

"You come up here to mother," she said. "She knows what to do with fresh Johnnies like that!"

"Go on an' get next to the lady," Jennie advised. "She's good people, and Jean and I want to talk this mess over."

After Ruth had joined the middle-aged lady and her daughters in the front of the coach, the merry carefree faces of the two girls changed instantly to anxious ones and they sat watching the rear door.

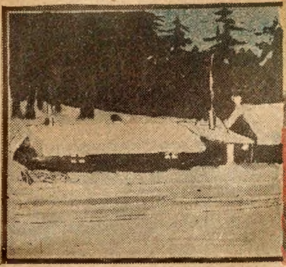
"There's something goin' to be pulled off here," Jennie said, presently. "That plain clothes guy got a long wire while he was at the last station, and he seemed mightily pleased over it. They're after that poor kid, all right."

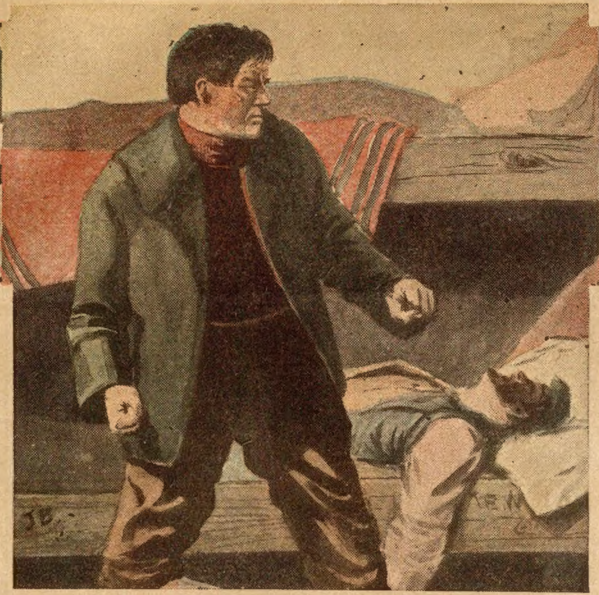
(Continued on page ten.)

OUT WEST STORIES

THE JUDGMENT,

By KING McCORD





"If anybody wants trouble they know where to find it."

[Copyright 1912 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

ALL the short winter afternoon he had plodded doggedly along the wet, snowy trail through the forest. The ensuing twilight, brief at best, differed little from the following darkness, so dense were the woods through which he traveled. The road was familiar, for he did not hesitate to plow ahead when night fell, although his progress was slower. Once he stopped and took a long pull at a black bottle that fitted into a pocket of his jacket. After the moon had risen he went faster, with nervous, impatient stride, but it had been up an hour before he swung at last into the clearing and halted in the shadow.

The sight of a lumberjack moving about the camp after dark would arouse no one's curiosity, but still he kept well under cover when he paused and gazed upon the scene before him. He paid little heed to the stable, the cookhouse, or the bunkhouse, but he looked long at the foreman's shack and at the shed that served the lumber camp as both blacksmith's shop and storehouse. There were lights in all the buildings but the stable. Still within the shadow of the trees, the man worked his way past the bunkhouse and peered in at the window from which streamed the only light in the foreman's quarters.

Before the fire sat Lars Olson, the foreman, laboriously making marks in his time book. Beside him, knitting a huge red sock, with her back to the light, sat his wife. The man at the window dismissed them with one glance, just as he had eliminated the men's low, long hut, the cookhouse, and the stable, when he had made his first survey.

Lars Olson and his wife had no interest for him, but the room itself had a story to tell. On a corner of a table lay a checkerboard with pieces upon some of the squares. Two chairs pushed back from the table told of some whim of the players that had caused them to desert the game. The observer stood irresolute for a minute, his eyes wandering to the darkened windows of the building. The shouts and the snatches of song from the bunkhouse, however, persuaded him that the hour was not late. He walked around the storehouse, his footfalls deadened by the snow, and looked in at a window whence came a soft glow.

The sight he there beheld caused his fingers to tighten to a vise-like grip in his heavy mittens. The door of the big wood stove was open, and before the fire, gazing in at the glowing coals, sat a young man with a fair-haired girl. Her hand was in his, and her head rested on his shoulder.

The lumberjack, standing in the snow, looking a giant in size in the gloom of the shadow, smiled scornfully at the stripling within. He noted his slenderness, and drew a deep breath, throwing back his shoulders to accentuate his own massiveness. He noted his delicate hand, and then gazed at his own bear's paw. The comparison pleased him, but the feeling of triumph was short-lived, however, for another look at the delicate hand reminded him that it enclosed that of the girl with an unresisted clasp.

The watcher's eyes narrowed to angry slits. Tense with the emotion that raged within him, he edged closer to the window, as if to drink with greedy ear the words the lovers uttered. He saw their lips move, but he could hear nothing. The earnestness of their conversation was as maddening as was their quiet, affectionate manner. At last the girl sprang from her chair, perhaps warned by the blackening embers that time was flying, and her companion rose also, with a protesting hand upon her arm. She shook him off with a laugh, and reached for her shawl.

The man at the window gritted his teeth, breathing hard the while, as he beheld the young fellow adjust the shawl with all a lover's gallantry. What next took place dragged the very breath from his body, as he quivered with rage. He saw the youth draw the maiden to him, he saw her lift her face to his in loving confidence, he saw their lips meet.

A dozen hasty strides he took away, and then was drawn back again like the fated moth to the candle. But this time there was nothing to see. Just as he reached the window the door of the stove was closed, shutting out what had been the room's only light. Knowing where the pair would go, and refusing to rob himself of any scrap of conversation, the man, still keeping in the darkness, made his way back to the foreman's house, and crouched in the deeper shadow of a barrel beside the kitchen stoop. Within a yard of him, they paused on the threshold before opening the door.

"We'd better go to town in the morning," she said. "I've got to buy some things at the store; you know that, Frank."

"But we can't get married tomorrow. The Pilot won't be to Rose Creek till Sunday," he answered.

"Well, tomorrow's Saturday. That's only one day more. We can both stay at Aunt Olga's, and ma and pa can drive over Sunday morning. Of course," she added, slowly, "if you don't want to——"

"Oh, Hilda," he cried, "how can you say that; I can't bear even to joke about such a thing. There's nothing I wouldn't do for you. You know it, else you wouldn't have said you'd marry me. Just think! In two days you'll be Mrs. Frank Johnson!"

There was silence for a moment, then the girl's rippling laugh. The door opened, closed again, and the lumberjack, crouching behind the barrel, had only his bitter thoughts for company.

Then she was really going to marry Frank Johnson. He had not done her the injustice to believe she was not sincere when through the window he had beheld her thrill with joy at the slightest caress, but not until he had heard the words from her lips did he fully realize that Hilda had promised to marry another. The thought was a physical pain to him. He straightened up, and moved away from the building. There was no occasion for him to reason out why such a thing could be. It was wrong, that was all; it was wrong. He didn't try to persuade himself that he had been at fault, had thrown away his opportunity for happiness; he only knew that Hilda was to marry another.

There was again the unreasoning comparison of physical powers. Was he, who in days past had crushed the ribs of a bear, to be rejected for a soft city youth, too puny to wield an ax? The thought maddened him. It gave birth to an impulse that grew and grew, as he paced up and down in the shadow. If he had crushed a bear, couldn't he——

The burly lumberjack skulked to the door of the storehouse and waited. His mittens he stuffed into a pocket, and after a long draught from the black bottle he buttoned his jacket snug about his throat. Not a soul had seen him, no one would know. He could be back in Rose Creek before daylight. The young storekeeper, who slept alone in the storehouse, would come out of Lars Olson's kitchen door, which was shaded by the trees, cross a little patch of moonlight, plunge again into the shadow, and then——

He had not long to wait. The door was opened for an instant, and he heard the last cheery good nights exchanged. Now only a stretch of moonlight separated him from the man who had stolen Hilda from him. Out into that moonlight walked the happy lover, whistling a cheap, popular love melody, which ran through the lumberjack's veins like fire. His muscles stiffened to steel as he prepared to still that mocking whistle forever.

The youth was almost within the shadow, when the sudden opening of the door of the cookhouse caused him to stop and turn in that direction. In the flood of light in the open door stood the camp cook, with his weather eye cast up at the sky. The storekeeper hailed him.

"Hi, cookee, working yet?"

"Ay bane always warkin'," replied the lord of the beansoup kettle. Finding some one with whom he could chat, he walked out a few steps into the snow, still observing the heavens.

"What's the weather going to be tomorrow?" asked Johnson.

"It'll bay colder."

"I hope so," replied the storekeeper gayly. "I'm going to town, and I want to see everything frozen up. The roads would 'a' been pretty heavy today for a sled."

Johnson walked over to the storehouse. The cook kept discoursing all the while about the probabilities of a cold spell, until he said good night and closed and barred his door. The weather prophet, after glancing once more at the sky, went back into his kitchen. So it came about that blue-eyed Hilda's betrothed had escaped death because of the social propensities of the camp cook.

The lumberjack had steeled himself for a supreme effort, and the sudden balking of his murderous intent had brought about a nervous reaction that left him weak with fury. There was now nothing for him to do but to go to the bunkhouse. Yet he had sense enough to see that he was in no condition to meet the men he would find there. As he needed time to regain his composure, he walked back along the trail for a couple of hundred yards, and to pull himself together took another long swig at his bottle. He now began to realize how cold and wet he was. The only effect of the cheap whisky was to make his head swim.

There was no chance for him to sneak in unobserved. Then, too, since he had been away for three days, there was no telling who had pre-empted his bunk. On reaching the cabin he heard Stumpy Schanfeld's asthmatic accordion wheezing out a dolorous tune. No one was asleep, that was certain. He opened the door and slouched in.

"Hello, Red, where'd you drop from?" sang out Baldy Pearson, the first to spy him.

"Rose Creek," was his mumbled response, as he sat down on a bunk to draw off his wet boots.

"Say, boys," shouted the astonished Baldy, "we'll have to move on west. Rose Creek's got religion, and 's wearing a white ribbon. Red Sheperdson's back in three days, and sober."

At this sparkling outburst of native with there was a loud guffaw, in which Red Sheperdson did not join.

There were over a score of men in the long, low, ill-smelling room. They lounged about the glowing stove in the center, or hung over the bunks arranged in two tiers along the walls. A dim light was furnished by two hanging kerosene lamps, under one of which a card game was in progress on an upturned cask.

"Lucky Dan's snake room must 'a' been full," ventured Jud Feeley, a stocky little man with a radiant nose. "Wasn't there room for you, Red?"

"Just 'couse you go to Rose Creek, you don't have to git yer skin full," growled Red, peeling off his sheepskin jacket.

A lumberjack who returns from town before he has spent all his money in convivial channels and lain in the snake room for a day or so is disgraced in the eyes of the veteran topers of the forest. Since there are so many drunken men in the small lumber towns at one time, the snake room, as it is called, is a grim necessity. It is merely a bare room at the back of a saloon, where the owner of the resort deposits his patrons when they are too far gone to order another round of drinks. As a matter of course, he always relieves them of any money they may happen to have left. On regaining consciousness, the lumberjack sets off for camp uncomplainingly, usually with a light heart, and always with a lighter pocketbook. Life holds nothing more for these invertebrates of the woods.

"How 'bout it, Red?" continued Baldy, "Is the Pilot cleanin' up Rose Creek? Can't you stand his preachin'?"

This reference to the apostle to the lumberjacks was too strong a reminder of what that man of God was soon to be called upon to do. For answer Sheperdson only snarled out an oath as he threw his boots close to the stove to dry.

"Ev'rybody up here thinks there's goin' to be a weddin', Red. Did you come back for it, or is it your weddin'?" piped Ole Lindquist, a fox-faced youth, who lolled on one elbow in a lower bunk, looking over the shoulder of a player in the card game.

By a great effort Sheperdson controlled himself, and any reply he muttered was lost in the laugh that followed. The men divined that Red had been cut on the raw, and they enjoyed it. Although he caroused with them, he was not popular, since he could not overcome a certain aloofness even in his degradation. He could not forget the man he once had been. Even the black bottle had not entirely killed his memory.

Little Lindquist lost no occasion to prick and sting him; for Sheperdson, by his own assiduous attentions, had spoiled the plan he had made to pay court to Hilda Olson himself. It delighted him to remind Red, although he did not know how close a bond had once held the twain, that any hope he had ever entertained had been blasted by the appearance of the new citified storekeeper.

Emboldened by the success of his first remark, Lindquist tried another sally.

"Guess Red hurried back 'cause he heard that Johnson boy was a-sparkin' up closer to Old Man Olson's gal. Did he cut you out, Red?"

Sheperdson seemed to cross the narrow room at a bound. Before his tormentor had time to betray his surprise, much less to adopt defensive measures, the angry man had clutched him about the shoulders and dragged him free of the bunk. His feet only scraped the floor as the big lumberjack swung him up against the side-board of the upper bunk and pinned him there. A moment before

(Continued on page eight.)

the room had been filled with the hum of voices. Now it was silent with the strained stillness of expectancy. Lindquist lifted his arms as best he could to ward off the blow that would follow when the lumberjack removed his grasp from one of his shoulders, but the enraged man did not strike. He only glared at the little wasp, and gripped him tighter.

"You keep yer mouth shet," he bellowed, with an oath. "I don't care what they do. It ain't none o' yer business, and it ain't none o' mine, and don't you say so."

"I didn't mean nothin', Red," whined the youth.

"Then don't git fresh with me. D'you hear?"

"Y-yes," faltered Lindquist.

Without releasing his hold, Sheperdson took a step backward, and with no effort at tenderness slammed the gadfly back into the bunk whence he had dragged him.

A snicker, traceable to no one man, ran around the room with the renewed hum of voices. Taking it as his cue, to the accompaniment of his accordion, Stumpy Schanfield began to sing:

"My wife died, and I got another one,
I got another one,
I got another one——"

He got no further, for Sheperdson roared at him:

"Choke that off, Stumpy, or I'll chuck you and yer damned music box out into the snow!"

The accompaniment died away in a wailing gasp, and the singer was dumb. Then Red delivered his ultimatum.

"If anybody wants any trouble he knows where he kin find it."

There was no occasion to amplify this remark. Every one in the room acknowledged his physical prowess, and what was the use of their fighting about something that didn't vitally interest them.

Sheperdson picked his way among the steaming boots back to the bunk where he had thrown his coat. He did not ask to whom it belonged, but crawled into it, savagely determined to contest the nine points of law that possession gave him should his occupancy be questioned.

All night he tossed and rolled. When the room had grown quiet, which happened soon after he had declared himself, he had drained his bottle to the last drop, but even this did not bring him peace. It only made his wild thoughts whirl the wilder through his brain. He even believed that he prayed, at times, for God to give Hilda to him. He could think only of Hilda.

A hundred different plans of action for the morrow, each one grandiose and flattering to his vanity, were hazily considered, each one ending gloriously with the utter discomfiture of his rival and Hilda clasped to his heart. His reasoning was so unreal, that he never took into account the fact that Hilda did not care for him, that her heart was another's; he saw only Frank Johnson, a weakling, standing between him and the woman he loved.

Long before dawn the men in the bunkhouse were astir. Sheperdson heard the bustle of preparation for the labor of the day, but he made no move. He had work before him, yet there would be no swinging of the ax in the forest for him that day. He lay in his bunk and waited, thinking what to do. All the mad fancies of the night paled with the coming of the day, yet his purpose remained firm: he would prevent this marriage. God had meant Hilda for him, and he would keep his own. He would make no plan until he had seen her and talked to her. God would direct him. Whatever happened would be God's will.

The thought that he was an instrument of Divine Providence had a soothing effect upon the man. When he got out of his bunk he was visibly calm and self-possessed. Everything he did took on a ritualistic meaning. He gave to his toilet so much attention that he covertly glanced at Dutch Louie a number of times to see if he had noted the unusual care he was taking. Louie, however, was too busy cursing his broken leg, which had already kept him a prisoner for two weeks, to worry his Teutonic intellect with the wherefore of a lumberjack's fondness for a cracked mirror.

Truth to tell, when he felt himself on dress parade, Red Sheperdson did have cause for pride in his person. Even yet dissipation had not wholly marred his face, just as it had not begun to tell much upon his physique. No wonder that Hilda, in that desolate place remote from the men whom she knew only in books and dreams, had been struck with him. Then, too, he had seen something of the world, and held himself above the usual run of foresters. He affected to despise dwellers in cities, but he could tell brave tales. Yes, Hilda had been struck with him.

Sheperdson prevailed upon the cook to give him something to eat, and during breakfast was busy thinking how he could maneuver so as to talk to Hilda without interruption. In this, fortune favored him. He was just rising from the table when the girl entered to get some scraps for her chickens. He regarded her appearance as a direct answer to prayer.

The cook insisted on going out to feed her small flock for her, and before she could reach the door to follow him, the lumberjack had confronted her. She could no longer pretend that she did not see him.

"Don't go, Hilda," he begged, as he barred her way. "I want to talk to you."

A vague fear came upon her as she looked at the man, although she knew him well. He seemed so different from what he once had been.

"Come over to the kitchen, Red. I'm busy helping ma, and getting ready to go to town. You can talk to me there."

"No, you must listen to me now," he commanded, savagely. The girl sought to walk past him, but he grasped her by the arm. "You can't go till you hear me."

"You have no right to stop me, Red," she cried, thoroughly alarmed by his wild manner and the look in his eyes.

"I ain't? I got every right."

He loosed her arm, but she feared to try to pass.

"Well, what is it?"

"Hilda," he demanded, sternly, "are you going to marry Frank Johnson?"

Now she understood.

"What's that to you?"

"Are you?"

"Yes, I am."

"And what of me? Didn't you promise to be my wife? Can you say one thing when the leaves are green and another thing when the snow falls? There, by the lake that night, you answered, 'Red, I love you!' You can't love twice. Nobody can. Didn't you love me then, or don't you love him now? It's me you love, you can't love twice."

"I thought I loved you, Red, but I didn't. Can't you forgive me? Can't we be friends?"

"You can be my wife, that's all. You promised me. Ain't yer promise sacred? You can't say you just thought you loved me. You did love me, and you do yet—even if you think just now you don't. I saw you last night, but there warn't no such look in yer eyes as there was the night you stood beside the lake and told me you'd go to the end o' the world with me. A girl kin look that way only once in all her life."

Hilda hid her face in her hands, as if by closing her eyes she could banish a scene that had nothing for her but pain. The big man held out his arms supplicatingly, but she did not see. He was all a-tremble, and only after an effort could he continue.

"Oh, Hilda, Hilda! I didn't believe you when you told me you didn't care for me any more. I just thought you was restless, girl, and it'd be all right after a while. You ain't true to yerself. Love ain't something that kin die. It's born, and it just keeps going on and on to the end o' the world—where you said you'd go with me, Hilda."

The pathetic note in his tender reference to their love touched her to tears. She couldn't deny that the look he spoke of a girl having only once in her life had bared her soul to him the night he whispered that he loved her. She had loved him—once.

Sheperdson saw that she was moved by his appeal to the past. He waited until she dried her eyes before he asked gently: "What of my happiness?"

The remark aroused the girl as nothing he had yet said had done. There surged over her the memory of all she had suffered, and her eyes flashed as she answered his question with another.

"Your happiness! What of mine? I did love you, but you killed that love. Love can die, just like anything else can." She dropped her voice and began to talk just as she would to a child. "One summer I neglected to water a rosebush ma gave me, and it died. The roses was pretty, but I didn't trouble to take care of them, and they all withered. It wasn't their fault they died, Red—it was mine. They wanted to live. The next year I got another rosebush, but this time I took care of it; and now in the summer the roses cover all the house and fill it with their fragrance."

Hilda paused, and the man gazed at her with a doubtful look. She thought it best that he should not misinterpret her meaning, and hastened to explain.

"You're just like I was Red. You had your rosebush—that's my heart—but when you neglected it and trampled on it, it died. The next time don't be selfish—remember the girl; take care that you make love grow instead of die."

Her quiet determination stirred up all the anger that had marked his first words to her. He burst forth again with the same question: "What of my happiness?"

"And I asked you, what of mine? Are you so selfish as to refuse me a new happiness? Do you think you could make me happy now?"

"You thought so once."

"The more fool, I," she replied, bitterly. "I was young, and didn't know no better. When I heard about how you carried on every time you went down to Rose Creek, I didn't believe it at first. I thought you was too strong. That's how I loved you. I thought you'd seen too many men liquor'd got the best of."

"Everybody drinks," he deprecated.

"Your love should have been strong enough to keep you from drinking. And that wasn't all. Ask the women of Rose Creek——"

"It was the drink," he maintained, stubbornly.

"You chose between us; stick to it, for I'm done with you."

"You may think you're done with me, but you ain't. I won't let that city sapling have you. I've chosen—and I've chosen you. Let that little storekeeper look out not to come between us. What happens to him will be God's judgment. You belong to me; you can't love twice."

"Then I didn't love you," she answered, defiantly. "I love Frank and what's more, I'm going to marry him tomorrow."

At this Sheperdson stepped aside, permitting her to pass. She had reached the door before he gave his final warning:

"Remember, Hilda, if you try to marry him, whatever happens will be the judgment of God."

The girl made no answer. After she had gone the lumberjack walked back to the bunkhouse. Hilda's decision had made his course clear to him. When he entered the men's quarters there was about his every movement the same coolness and the same calculated design that before breakfast had made him fear the notice of Dutch Louie. From a peg at the far end of the room he took down a heavy repeating rifle, and examined it carefully.

"Hey! Vot you make mit dot gun?" asked Louie.

"I'm going to shoot a bear over by Number Six," replied Sheperdson. "I seen his tracks this morning."

"A pear in der winter time? Nein, dey vas all shleepings."

"This one ain't," was Red's only answer.

When he left the bunkhouse the lumberjack kept that building between him and the foreman's house until he was well hidden by the timber. Had Dutch Louie seen him through the window, he would have reported that he had departed in the direction of Number Six.

Once out of sight of the camp, however, Sheperdson struck a trail that carried him in the general direction of Rose Creek. It was a good five miles before the path crossed the Rose Creek road, but he knew that he was in plenty of time. At the crossing he walked back along the road toward the camp. Just as Abraham, directed from on high, had found the proper spot in the land of Moriah for the sacrifice of Isaac unto the Lord, he felt himself led to the place where would be offered up the life of a man whom God had judged should die unless he should renounce Hilda.

The point he had in mind was ideal for his purpose. On one side the steep, bare hill, deeply covered with snow, rose several hundred feet; on the other side the descent was as great. The timber had been cut away and the stumps burned. Meeting at such a place, there could be no escape. The issue would have to be squarely met in that narrow road.

It was a bright, bracing morning, crisp with cold. For several days the weather had been warm, and the snow wet and heavy; but the cookee's prediction of a cold snap had been correct. The sudden fall in temperature during the night had wrapped the earth in a sheet of ice under its blanket of snow.

Sheperdson reached the turn beyond which the road was almost a mere groove in the steep slope of snow, and waited. His heart was light. He felt as one who had girt about him the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. To pass the time he picked up bits of ice and tossed them about aimlessly. Wherever the ice struck on the hillside a little pile of snow would slip down into the road.

Soon was heard the lazy tinkle of sleigh bells. The lumberjack turned the corner, saw Hilda and Johnson, and walked to meet the advancing team.

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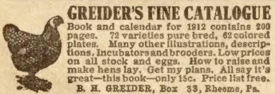
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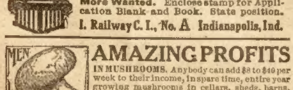
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When he shouted a command to stop, flourishing his rifle, Johnson drew rein. As soon as Hilda recognized who barred their way she half rose, shifting her position so as to shield her lover, but he ordered her to sit down and pushed her back into her seat. On all that bleak hillside there was but one huge bowlder, and it was beneath this that the sled had been brought to a stand.

"What do you want?" called Johnson.

"You know, you thief," roared Sheperdson, standing in the road about fifteen yards ahead of the team. "You're trying to steal Hilda from me, but you've got to give her up. She belongs to me."

The girl said something to her companion in time to check an angry answer, and cause him to say in a conciliatory tone:

"Jump in, Red, and go with us to Rose Creek. We can't decide such things on the roadside. We'll fix it up all right in town."

"No, we won't. There ain't nothin' to fix. Hilda's mine. God give her to me. You git out o' that sled. It's Hilda and me are goin' to town. And we're goin' to git married there, too."

"And what if I say 'no?'" was the bold reply.

The man in the road caressed his weapon with a sardonic tenderness.

"I guess you'd ruther walk back to camp than be carried back."

At this Hilda rose again as if to shield her lover.

"Surely, Red," she cried, "you wouldn't shoot a man, especially the man I love!"

"You don't love him, Hilda. He's bewitched you. You kin only love once, and it's me you love. Unless he gits out and lets us go in peace, God's judgment be upon him."

While the lovers talked together in low tones, Sheperdson stood guard with his gun at his shoulder. Soon his attention was attracted by a shadow skimming over the snow on the hillside. Looking up he saw a big hawk lazily wheeling about.

"If you don't hurry up and git out o' that sled, Johnson, I'll shoot you just like I'm goin' to shoot that hawk," he shouted. "Hilda was made fer me from the beginnin' o' the world. If you don't believe it, you'll bring yourself to judgment just like that hawk falls."

With these words he took careful aim and fired. The hawk, rolled over and over, dropped into the snow some distance above him.

At the loud report of the heavy gun a thousand echoes woke upon the hill. Clashing and reverberating, they appeared to assault the snow slope from ten thousand different points. They were still rattling discordantly, when a little flurry of powdery white rose where the hawk had pitched into the snow. Then it seemed as if the whole hillside had begun to move, slowly at first, just where the hawk had fallen, then faster. The girl was the first to recognize what had happened.

"The slide! The slide!" she screamed.

For the fatal fraction of a second Red Sheperdson stood fascinated by the stupendous consequences of his shot. Started by the concussion, the snow was slipping down upon him. When he flung his gun aside and began to run, it was too late. No human power could battle the avalanche. Sweeping the steep hillside bare, thousands upon thousands of tons of snow crashed into the ravine far below, and beneath the mighty mass lay buried all that was mortal of Red Sheperdson.

Safe under the bowlder, which had diverted the slide from those few feet of road, sat Hilda Olson and the man she loved.

The judgment had been accomplished.

The End.

* * *

Actions and Words.

Frank Smith, who pitched last season for Cincinnati in the National League, was reared at Tarboro, N. C., and began playing ball there. He became the baseball idol of his fellow Tarborians, and when George Leidy, now manager of the San San Antonio team in the Texas League, came to the town to lure the young phenomenon into faster company, the whole community showed their resentment very decidedly.

"I was at the hotel," said Leidy, telling about it, "when a dozen husky, determined-looking citizens walked in on me and began making threats. They told me that Frank Smith was going to stay right where he was, and that if I wanted to go on living I'd better catch a train leaving at 7:30 o'clock that night.

"What did you say to that?" asked a listener.

"I told them," said Leidy, "to go to thunder. I told them that I was a free-born American citizen, and that I would stay there a year if I wanted to. I told them in so many words that they couldn't bluff me, and that I would die in my tracks before I would show the white feather—but I was at the depot at a quarter of seven."

* * *

A Growing Habit.

She (on the train)—When we were on our wedding tour, three months ago, you sat by my side during the whole journey; but now, the moment we are seated, you want to rush off to the smoking car.

He—Well—er—the smoking habit grows as one grows older.

HER HAIR.

"Is she pretty?" asked the young woman.

"Awfully pretty," the young man replied enthusiastically. Then a wireless struck him and he hedged. "Oh, well," he added, "not so awfully—only first you think so. She's not my style at all."

"Harry," said the young woman in a pained tone, "you act as though you thought I was jealous and you had to modify your rapture. I don't see why you can't be honest. I can't help it if you run across some girl you like better than you do me. I——"

"I haven't," protested the young man. "I just happened to mention that my sister had a friend visiting her and then you began questioning me——"

"I don't want to pry," said the young woman, proudly if sadly. "I hope I have enough strength of character to bear in silence whatever pain comes to me. Yet it hurts me that you should think I am jealous. There isn't a jealous hair in my head. If some one who is prettier and brighter and more fascinating than I am comes along it's only natural that you should turn from me—it's every man's nature. I suppose, being so sensitive and tender-hearted, I can't help showing that I am hurt, but that's not to my discredit. I can't stand it for you to think it is jealousy. Did you say her hair was blonde?"

"Why—er——" wavered the young man uncomfortably. "It's a sort of sunny chestnut."

"Dear me!" declared the young woman, after a moment of silence, "you must have devoted a lot of time to studying her to be so thoroughly informed about the exact shade—and she's been here only three days! I don't believe you know the color of my hair this minute, and you've known me two years! Still, mine's only tow color, and I can't expect you to take so much notice of it as you would if it were the color of a hickory nut. O, you said a chestnut, didn't you? Well, they are nearly alike. It's probably dyed anyhow, because those peculiar colors hardly ever are real. Did you say her eyes are blue?"

"Brown," said the young man meekly.

The young woman laughed in a strained way. "It's lucky I'm not jealous," she said. "You know the color of her eyes, and it's been only three days—and a few weeks ago when I asked you the color of my eyes you called it gray, when they're blue! That shows how little notice you take of me. How long is she going to stay?"

"I don't know," said the young man, "and what's more I don't care! Why should you stir up all this row over a girl that I don't care a rap about just because I happened to speak of her? Mabel, you're very exasperating!"

'I suppose it does annoy you to be questioned," remarked the young woman. "It must be hard answering things when you are afraid of revealing your true sentiments. I suppose she got her eyes on you from the very start, and——"

"Mabel!" exclaimed the young man, "I wish you wouldn t work yourself up into such a state of mind over nothing! Haven't I told you time and again that you are the only girl for me? She——"

"Men are so helpless!" interrupted the young woman. "They are just like putty when a designing woman sets out to make them like her! I don't see why, they can't have some strength of mind! But I don't want you to think I'm not glad you are happy and are having such a good time.

"Why, Harry, I'm very glad! I'm unselfish enough to want you to be cheerful if I am not! I suppose if I thought only of myself, like some other girls, I wouldn't feel that way—I'd go right ahead and flirt with any man I happened to fancy, no matter if he was engaged to another girl, and that girl an intimate friend of his sister's! It must be very convenient to have a disposition like that! Not that I'm alluding to your friend, for you are so crazy about her that, of course, she must be perfectly lovely. So I don't blame you a bit; not a bit!"

"I wish you would stop a minute and listen to me!" begged the young man. "I had no idea you'd be foolish enough to be jeal——"

"There you go!" cried the young woman. "Haven't I told you over and over again that I'm not jealous? I wouldn't degrade myself——"

"Then why——"

"Men are so stupid!" cried the young woman. "Nobody but a man could find a single thing in what I've said to make him think me jealous! I——"

"She doesn't begin to be as attractive as you," said the young man. "Honest, Mabel, I never saw another girl with a complexion equal to yours and with such a fetching way of carrying her head! You've got me, all right!"

"Is that really so, Harry!" murmured the young woman. "Come over here and sit by me. The idea of your thinking me jealous!"

* * *

A Lonely Mortal.

Bilkins—How de do? Had the grip yet?

Wilkins—No.

Bilkins—I'm sorry for you, old fellow. What on earth do you talk about when you meet people?

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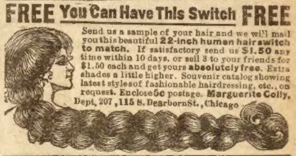
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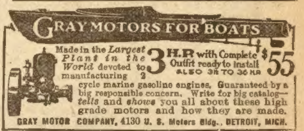
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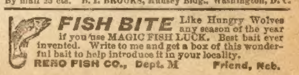
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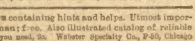

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Snaring Maiden Feet.

(Continued from page six.)

CHAPTER XII.

THE EDITOR EXPLAINS.

The private office of the managing editor of the Daily Star was a pleasant, though rather mussy, room on a December night soon after the departure of Ruth Holme from the city. There was a gas-log blaze in an open grate, and the glow of it tinted the light of the electrics.

Desks, tables, chairs, and even the Oriental rug on the floor were littered with papers, manuscripts and letters. The levers which controlled the intricate machinery of the great newspaper—the electric buttons, speaking tubes, and bells—were much in evidence, but the guiding spirit of the place was absent.

The only person in the room was a rosy-cheeked girl of, perhaps, twenty, with merry blue eyes, a tip-tilted little nose, and a saucy mouth. She sat at a table in the middle of the room, busy over the keyboard of a typewriting machine.

As the little round clock on the mantel over the grate struck nine, the door opened, and a young man of about twenty entered, closing the door softly and making certain that his intrusion had not been observed by the girl. He was a wholesome young fellow, with a clean-shaven, health-tinted face, bright black eyes, with a sparkle of humor in them, and a figure short and stout.

The girl turned away from her machine, as the young man advanced cautiously toward her, and opened a dictionary on a stand close by her side.

"Dis—dis——" she mused, half aloud, "I don't believe there is such a word as 'disenchantment'."

The newcomer laughed, and laid a hand on the girl's shining brown hair.

"Another bad spell, Rose?" he asked.

The girl sprang to her feet with a cry of surprise, and lifted a book to throw at the intruder.

"You!" she cried. "If Mr. Bennett catches you in here——"

The intruder took a notebook and pencil from his pocket and began to sketch.

"Don't move, dear," he cried, with a perfectly serious face. "That's the pose I've been wanting for the lead girl in my new play, 'The Crowded Flat; or, Why Was the Paper on the Wall So Thick?' That's pretty poor, I guess. Just look here."

He took a cardcase from a pocket, and drew therefrom a square bit of pasteboard, which he extended toward the girl.

"What do you know about that?" he went on. "Read it. 'O. K. Quick, Reporter and Dramatist.' That will make the doors open, even as the walls fell down before the horn of the ram, or was it the horn of a cow?"

The girl threw herself into a chair and laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks.

"'O. K. Quick'!" she repeated. "What a name!"

"Quick?" he asked. "Why, that's a fine name. By the way, it will be your name, some day. The O. stands for Ogden, the K. stands for Ketchum, which was my mother's maiden name, and the Quick stands for the kind of a human intelligence I am. I had a notion of splitting the name in the middle, but deferred to the judgment of the city editor, who said he'd can me if I did."

"Mild kind of a suggestion," laughed Rose.

"Sure! He's a mild kind of a man, is the city editor. But look here. Wouldn't the card have been a scream? 'O. Ketchum Quick.' I guess that would have been classy."

While the girl laughed she watched the door.

"The managing editor wouldn't like to have you prowling about his room if he knew of it," she said.

"Oh, Bennett's all right," Quick replied. "I'm his star man. No pun intended. I've got four pieces in the man's newspaper today. That's going some. Three screams on the first page and a two-line head on the second page. This one about a millionaire and what a gay night cost him I got under the chief's porch last night. Man stood there and told his troubles to the winds of high heaven. I'd followed him, and so got wise to the racket. I'll get the strong arm when I see the chief. You see, the story wasn't ripe."

Rose looked toward the door anxiously.

"And this one," Quick went on, pointing to a three-deck heading on the first page, "I got of a 'fly cop' when he had a 'still' on. He's shadowing the Holme kid, and didn't know enough to keep his face shut. The Holme kid, you know, that's been in the limelight lately."

"Why are they shadowing her?" Rose asked.

"Blessed if I know. Don't think they know themselves. But, say, isn't that a peach of a story. All about the father being a forger and an impostor, and the kid an accomplice. That yarn wasn't ripe, either. They didn't want it given out that there was a warrant for the girl."

"The managing editor will like that," the girl said. "He's interested in the Holme case, you know."

"Yes; he's into it up to his ears, with an ax in each hand," replied the reporter. "I'd like to know why he's slamming the Holme bunch. It's no hair off his head if they do win the suit. Perhaps the old man will stop it."

"The old man?" questioned the girl.

"Yes, the old man—Mr. Elbert Simons Howard, the owner of the Star. Every man who owns a newspaper is the old man, whether he is old or not."

"But Mr. Howard is in Europe," suggested Rose.

"Not so you could reach him there by wireless. I saw him in the business office when I came up, talking with Ransom and Harley of the staff. He was mad, too."

"Then some one will get 'fired'," sighed the girl. "When Mr. Bennett, the managing editor, gets on one of his tantrums, he 'cans' half a dozen."

"Bennett's all right, only he isn't very bright," laughed the reporter.

Voices and footsteps were now heard outside the door, and Rose hastened back to her machine. The reporter started toward the entrance, hoping to escape before the managing editor's arrival, but, warned by the near approach of those in the hall, dodged into a closet and pulled the door to after him.

Frightened, Rose bent over her work, making the keyboard of her machine bubble like a boiling spring without accomplishing anything, and then the door opened and two men entered, the owner of the Star and his managing editor. The owner was young, blond, alert, pleasant of face, and immaculately dressed. The managing editor was slightly gray, and bent of shoulder. However, his black eyes were sharp and questioning, and his face still held some of the smoothness and bloom of youth.

Howard, the owner, had returned that day from France, and his visit to the office of his newspaper was merely a perfunctory one. During his many visits to the old and new countries of the world, Bennett had represented him absolutely in the conduct of the newspaper, and had ruled masterfully and wisely so far as finances were concerned.

The two men seated themselves near the big desk, and the managing editor turned to Rose, still peeping slyly at the closed door of the closet where the reporter was hidden.

"You may go for the night, Rose," he said.

"And this manuscript, sir?" the girl asked, hoping that some miracle would happen to release Quick from the closet.

"You may go for the night," repeated the managing editor.

There was nothing for the girl to do but to draw on her coat and hat and take her departure. As she left she turned once more to the closet door.

"He'll smother in there," she thought, "and perhaps tumble out on the rug; and then the managing editor will discharge him!"

With this not very logical summary of the situation and her fears, Rose went out and closed the door with a bang. Then, instead of leaving the building, she turned into a little waitingroom there was across the hall and waited for the explosion which she fully anticipated as soon as Quick should leave the closet.

"Before we go into business matters," the owner said, "I want a little information on the Holme case. I see you have been deciding the case for the defendants in advance of a verdict."

The managing editor flushed angrily, but his keen eyes showed better control.

"The Holme case," he said, toying with a pencil, "is a tissue of impudent fraud. The claimant has no shadow of a case. It is disgraceful that men should be put to the expense of defending their title to the property involved in these foolish suits."

The owner sat looking directly over the head of the managing editor, but did not speak.

"Here is the case in a nutshell," Bennett continued, hostility on his face, merged with the smile he showed. "Malcolm Holme and daughter lived in an old house away up on the coast of Maine. No one knew anything of them, good or bad. One night, something over two years ago, a sailing vessel went to pieces on the rocks, and an old man said to resemble, in some negative way, the man Holme was conveyed from the shore to the house.

"There he, it is said, made a will and died. It is claimed that he escaped death in the surf, but it is shown that not one of the hardy seamen succeeded in reaching the shore alive, so it is improbable that a weak old man should have done so. The defendants set up the claim that the man never took passage in the wrecked ship.

"It is, in fact, asserted that the man was seen in the neighborhood previous to the night of the wreck. Now, although the will said to have been made that night, the night of his death, was signed with the name of Joseph Richards, it is set up by the claimants that he was Sir Jasper Holme, a brother of Malcolm Holme, and an escaped convict. When Sir Jasper Holme came to this country, years ago, it seems he traveled under the name of Richards, bought property in this city under that name, and was convicted of murder under that name and given a life sentence. He escaped from prison a short time before

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this unknown man made his appearance on the coast of Maine.

"It is contended that the Richard's will was not made that night. At least, it was not made in the presence of any person except Malcolm Holme, if it was made then. Even the witnesses do not claim that they heard the will read to the dying man or saw him put his signature to it. The doctor, one John Kimball, asserts that the man was in no condition to make a will. The servants, Steven and Sarah, do not dispute this.

"Malcolm Holme went to England, later, to take possession of the estate of Sir Jasper, his convict brother, and was turned down as a fraud. It is claimed there, just as it is insisted here, that Sir Jasper Holme, alias Richards, is still alive. The officers of the law are hot on his track, and in less than a week Malcolm Holme's case will fall to the ground, because of the appearance of Sir Jasper, alias Richards, who could not have made the will in question, because he was not in that part of the country at that time.

"In accordance with the wishes of the criminal officers of the county, a warrant against Malcolm Holme and his daughter Ruth has been issued, on complaint made by one of the defendants. It is not the purpose of the State, however, to arrest the two before the appearance of Sir Jasper Holme. Until that time they will be under close surveillance."

"A most remarkable case," the owner said. "Well," he added, "keep your hands off until you have the court records to back you. Don't decide the case in advance of the trial. Now as to your report."

"Where, may I ask, did you receive your information of the case?" asked Bennett, with a snap of the jaws. "Have you been interviewed by two of your own men, Ransom, the Sunday editor, and Harley, a reporter?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"Because these two men met this Ruth Holme a few nights ago, on the occasion of the accident to her father, and became enamoured of her—as I have been led to believe. They were locked up at the Shannon street police station with her—or, at least, were placed in a cell charged with deadly assault, while she was given over to the charge of the matron. I don't exactly know why the charge of deadly assault against them was not pressed, but it was not. Since then they have been writing articles favoring the claimant, and I have been throwing them to the paper mill."

"I have seen them both," Howard replied. Then, seeing the anger in the eyes of the manag'ng editor, and fearing that the discharge of the men would follow, he hastened to say: "I consider them very competent men, and hope they will be prompted to better positions when opportunity offers."

"Very well, sir," was the reply. "I'll look after their interests."

The owner smiled, but did not again refer to that phase of the case.

"When do they, the officers, expect to produce Jasper Holme, alias Richards, in court?" he asked.

"Well, the man faces a life sentence, was the reply, "and it is not so easy to lay hold of him. However, it is now hinted that he was unjustly convicted, and will be pardoned when he appears."

"I see," said the owner, slowly, "as soon as he confesses that he is Sir Jasper Holme, asserts that he never signed that will, and comes to a compromise with the defendants, he will be pardoned?"

"That is the supposition, sir."

"Have you ever questioned the honesty of the defendants in putting a man forward as the escaped convict?"

"Oh, but the defendants are men who are above suspicion," was the reply. "Besides, the city is largely interested in the case. Some of our park and boulevard lands are claimed by Holme."

"Well, drop the case for the present," ordered the owner, leaving his chair and moving toward the door. "I'm tired now, and will look over your report at another time."

The managing editor arose and moved toward the door with the owner. There was rage in his heart, but he smiled. While they stood there, a little commotion was heard outside and both stepped down the corridor. The reporter opened the closet door softly, looked out into the vacant room, and walked to the door.

When he gained the corridor he heard the two men talking at the elevator landing, and, not caring to be seen there, he dodged into the little waitingroom where Rose had taken refuge, and closed the door.

Bennett, his face now sét and gray with anger, walked back to the editorial room alone in a minute. He stopped at the threshold and looked at the closet door. It had been closed a minute before; now it was wide open. What had been going on there, he questioned. While pondering over the matter a messenger entered and handed him a telegram.

Glancing at it hastily, a look of triumph in his eyes, he hurried to the door and called to the owner, still waiting the slow movements of the elevator. His voice was eager, elated.

"Mr. Howard!" he called. "I have something definite now, concerning the escaped convict in the Holme case."

The owner returned to the room, and the door was closed.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ARREST IN NEW ORLEANS.

When the door of the managing editor's room closed, Bennett passed the message he had just received over to his chief

"See for yourself," he said, "what there is to this preposterous Holme claim. This tele ram - as forwarded to me just now, by Captain Preston, of the Shannon street police station. It announces the arrest, in New Orleans, of the escaped convict, Sir Jasper Holme, alias Richards. He didn't die up there on the coast of Maine, it appears," he added, a note of victory in his voice. "He never made the will now brought forward by this cheating brother."

Howard took the message in his hand and read it. The statement was a most astonishing one. There surely was fraud somewhere.

"'Confession promised,'" he read. "Do you know," he added, glancing keenly at his managing editor, "that I'm becoming greatly interested in this case?"

"That is natural, sir. I've been greatly interested in it from the start, and may have been a little too eager to slam the claimant in the Star," he added in an apologetic way. "However, as it has come out as I predicted, no harm has been done," he continued in a self-satisfied tone.

Howard smiled, but made no reply. During the short pause the door opened, and the city editor entered and stood waiting.

"Well?" asked Bennett.

"I have news of the arrest of the escaped convict, Jasper Holme, alias Richards, at New Orleans," Angell, the city editor said, "and also," he hastened on, as Bennett was about to interrupt him, "news of the arrest of a man charged with sandbagging Malcolm Holme on the night he was found nearly dead on the street and taken to the morgue, thence to a hospital."

The managing editor sprang to his feet at the words confirming Preston's message, but his eyes flashed with sudden anger as the report of the local arrest came to him.

"Who is it that has been arrested for assaulting Holme?" he asked, quickly.

"Tim Cassidy," was the reply. "He's a tough private detective."

The managing editor whirled about about the room angrily for a moment, and then asked:

"Has Jasper Holme's confession, made in New Orleans, been received?"

"There is nothing said about a confession in the dispatch turned over to me by the telegraph editor," was the reply. "The wire says he acknowledged his identity, but closes with the abrupt statement that he will say no more than that."

Again the managing editor walked about the room, meditatively kicking the newspapers which lay in his path.

"What is your idea regarding the use of these two stories?" he finally asked, turning to the owner. "Odd that they should have come to the city desk at the same time."

"Where does the news of the arrest of Cassidy come from?" asked Howard of the city editor, not replying to the direct question of the managing editor.

"From Inspector Fallon," was the reply. "He's taking a strong interest in the matter, it seems. He gave the story to Harley, the reporter on that beat."

"So he's joined hands with Ransom and Harley, has he?" snarled Bennett.

Howard lifted his brows significantly as the words came to his ears, and threw himself into a chair. The Holme case was becoming exciting. Why should Bennett assume such an attitude as that? Why should he assume that the activities of Inspector Fallon came of his joining hands with Ransom and Harley?

"Have you any suggestions?" Bennett asked, his voice hoarser than usual. "We must get our men at work."

"Send a man, tonight, to New Orleans to follow that end of the case, and detail another to work up the Cassidy arrest. Print the dispatch from New Orleans just as received, without comment, and play the Cassidy feature up on the first page."

If the owner could have seen the managing editor's nails biting into the palms of his hands, could have looked into his brain and seen the anger and commotion there, he would have known how desparate and antagonistic to the Holme interest the man was.

The city editor stood waiting, his eyes fixed on the face of the managing editor. Howard motioned him to a chair.

"I'm afraid, sir," Angell said, apologetically, "that I ought to be getting this matter in hand. We have Cassidy's picture, and also that of Malcolm Holme. We ought to have the girl's, also, but can't get it. My idea is to make a layout for the first page. It is a great story, sir, when you come to consider that Holme has never been seen or heard from by any official since he was taken from the morgue that night."

"It does look like a good story," Howard said, slowly, his eyes fixed on the changing face of Bennett.

He paused a moment, and then asked of Bennett, his eyes searching those of the latter as he gave out the words:

"Do you know where Malcolm Holme is, Bennett?"

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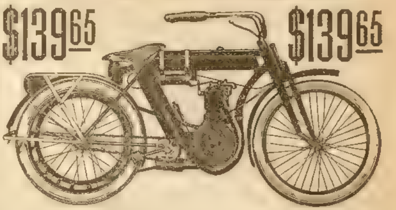

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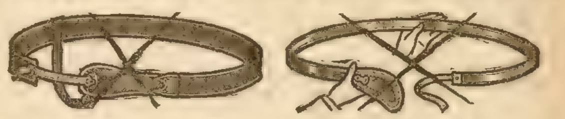

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Bennett stared at his chief like a man in a daze. A blow on the head could hardly have produced a dumber look.

"No!" he replied, presently, his eyes shifting to the city editor.

"Does Captain Preston know where he is?" was the next question.

"If he does, sir, he has not taken me into his confidence.'

The managing editor was regaining his pose of cool impersonality.

"Find out!" Howard ordered. "See Inspector Fallon and work with him. He appears to be doing the right thing. And now," he went on, his eyes burning accusingly into those of Bennett, "do you know where Ruth Holme is?"

"I do not," was the smiling reply. "I've been trying to find her. There's a good yarn in the girl, taken away from her father."

"Does Captain Preston know where she is?"

The newspaper owner motioned to the city editor, who was rising to leave the room, to remain where he was.

"If Captain Preston knows where the girl is," Bennett answered, "he has not admitted the knowledge to me."

Angell opened his lips to speak, but Bennett signaled for him to remain silent, while Howard asked him: "What where you about to say?"

"Why, replied the city editor, glancing apprehensively at Bennett, "a short time ago I received word from Captain Preston that one of his men had located Miss Holme with a fly-by-night musical comedy company heading for the West."

"Why didn't you tell me of the information you had received?" demanded Bennett, springing to his feet. "What did you do in the matter?"

"I started Harley out after the company and came in to report to you. You were not in at the time, and so I returned a moment ago."

"Harley has left the city?" asked Howard.

"I think so," the city editor replied. "He soon got track of the 'Only Girl' combination, the one Miss Holme is said to have left with, and ran off to the railway station. There was a train out in ten minutes from the time he left the office."

"Why did you send Harley?" asked the managing editor, inwardly raging.

"Because he knows Miss Holme by sight," was the conciliatory reply. "Because he pitied her on the night her father was assaulted, and went to her assistance. She would confide her story to him if she would tell it at all."

"She'll probably make a hit in musical comedy," Bennett snarled. "You see, sir," he added, turning to the owner, "what sort of company she seeks as soon as her father is out of the way."

"One thing Harley found out before he left, sir," the city editor cut in. "Miss Holme was not booked with the company. She must have gone as companion to some of the actresses, if she went at all."

"Find her," Howard said, shortly.

"Oh, Captain Preston's man will find her, all right," said the managing editor. "He'll find her and bring her back. There was nothing to warrant holding her, when she was at the station the other morning, but there is something tangible now."

"She will be brought back under arrest?" asked Howard, coolly.

"Of course, sir."

"And the charge?"

"Conspiracy to defraud and perjury. There is also a warrant for her father, as you doubtless know."

"It seems a pity to drag that girl back here under arrest," Howard said thoughtfully. "Why not ask Captain Preston to permit Harley to bring her back?"

"I'll do my best to have your wishes respected, sir."

The city editor arose and asked permission to return to his duties. Bennett excused himself and followed him to the corridor.

"What in the Old Scratch did you ever let out about Ruth Holme for?" he demanded. "Howard seems to have taken up with the claimant, and we're likely to have trouble enough with him, even if we keep what we know to ourselves. Now, he'll listen to her when she comes back, and our cake will be mighty thin, and all dough at that."

"Well, suppose she doesn't come back?"

"But the officers have reported knowledge of her whereabouts, and Harley has gone out after her. Sure she'll come back. There'll be trouble knee deep now."

"Well, she might be frightened away so she won't be found with the company. The right man might be able to do the trick."

"Have you a man in mind? A fellow who can keep his face shut!"

"Yes; Marlow."

"All right. Send him out, with instructions to get her away from Harley, if he gets anywhere near her. Hide her somewhere in the woods. Keep her out of the city."

"Why not ask Preston to take charge of her?"

"Yes; that might be all right."

"He's loyal, is he?"

"Oh, yes, I presume so; as loyal as any man you bribe ever is. He'll stick if he sees that we're going to win. He knows as well as we do that the minute these Holme suits are decided against the claimant there will be a million to split up."

"And he knows, too, that the judges and the managing editor will get the most of it," laughed the city editor. "I'm going to buy a cigarette with my share."

"The cases ought to have been disposed of long ago," the managing editor said. "We had only a feeble old man and a kid of a girl to fight, but the very Old Scratch has been plugging for them all the way through."

"Well, they have right on their side," said the other. "At least, I think so."

"But right comes true only when combined with money and influence," said the managing editor. "Besides, notwithstanding your wise and impertinent conclusions, it doesn't look as if they had right on their side when the escaped convict who is alleged to have made the will couldn't have been on the Atlantic coast at the time the will was executed."

The city editor passed the rebuke with a light laugh under which Bennett flushed. After some further talk they parted, Angell going to the city room, Bennett back to his chief.

As soon as the door of the latter's room closed, the door of the little waiting room opened, and two faces looked out— the faces of Quick, the reporter, and Rose, the stenographer.

The two closed the door softly and walked to the elevator. Not a word was said until they stood in a gust of December air on the pavement in front of the Star building. Then Quick looked the girl keenly in the face and asked:

"What do you think of that?"

"I think it's a rotten shame," the girl burst out. "Old Bennett's a conspirator, and I hope he'll get his needings before the Holme case is finished."

"A million to split!" Quick gasped. "Say, I'd like a cut of that watermelon."

"O. Ketchum Quick!" sputtered Rose, "if you mix in with Bennett in his warfare against that poor girl, I'll never speak to you again!"

"Then I won't!" said Quick, with a laugh. "Anything you say, goes old girl."

"Freshy!" said Rose.

"Right here," the reporter went on, "is where O. Ketchum Quick takes the future Mrs. Quick out to a lobster palace for a la Newburg. What?"

"You're all right for a kid reporter," Rose answered, "but you'd be about as much use as a man of family as a lame robin. Where do you want to go for lunch?"

"Any old place," Quick replied. "I'm heeled up right tonight. Haven't bought a lottery ticket in four months. Say, girlie, do you know that during the five years I played the lotteries a band never tooted in front of me on the street? Once, there was a conglomeration of brass horns started up a soulful melody about six feet from where I stood, but a team ran away and they had to walk by in silence!"

"You're a frost, all right," Rose said. "Here comes Marlow, the man Angell is sending after Ruth. Now, don't let him butt into our little party."

"Not on your whiskers—I mean curls!" Quick replied. "I've got things to say to the future Mrs. Quick tonight."

Marlow, evidently just from the city editor's room, came down the street and stopped in front of the two. Quick took Rose by the arm and hurried her along, but Marlow kept by their side.

"Say, O. Ketchum Quick," he said, presently, "how would you like a whiff of the country? I've just got an assignment that calls for an assistant, and I'll elect you to the post if you want it. I like that name, O. Ketchum Quick, because I've got to catch some one quick or lose my job."

Quick was about to give a short and impatient reply to the other, but the quickwitted girl tugged at his arm and whispered:

"It is the Holme girl he's got to catch. You see?"

Quick saw the wisdom of finding out definitely who it was that had to be caught quick, after receiving this hint, so he stopped and faced Marlow, who was a sprightly young fellow of long newspaper experience.

"It might be cute to get out into the tall timber," he said. "Who is it you'll have to catch or lose your job?"

"I'm not talking about it on the street," was the reply. "Say," he con-

(Continued on page seventeen.)

UNCLE SAM WANTS HELP.

Over 8,000 appointments are coming at excellent salaries, and those interested should write to Franklin Institute, Dept. A 79, Rochester, N. Y., for list showing positions open. Influence is not necessary.

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FREE ASTHMA CURE.

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❧ ❧ ❧

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

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MY New Census Business Guide, fastest selling book on earth. Agents making $10.00 daily. Outfit free. Prof. Nichols, Dept. B. L., Naperville, Ill.

AGENTS wanted to sell the Original Native Herbs. $1 box, 250 Tablets, for 60c. For rheumatism, liver kidney and stomach trouble. C. MELROSE, Columbus, Ohio

As the Woman Is.

I can't marry you, Jack."

This from Dorothy to Jack. He gasped at the suddenness of it. For three months they had been affianced and until now never a cloud had risen to mottle the blue of the heavens so close above them.

"W-w-why, Dorothy," he stammered, "what do you mean?"

For a moment she was very thoughtfull.

"Well," she said, calculating each word carefully, "I don't quite mean what I say, for I suppose I could marry you. What I mean is that I won't marry you."

"But why won't you?"

"I have my reasons."

"Have I done anything?"

"No," hesitating

"Don't you love me any more?"

"Oh quite as much as I ever did."

"And you never loved me enough to marry me?"

His voice roughened and there was the color of resentment in it. She had deceived him wilfully.

"I thought I did, Jack," and she held her eyes away from his.

"And now—and now," he almost sobbed, "it is all over. We shall be as nothing to each other. Oh, Dorothy."

"Don't say that, Jack," she protested, cheerfully. "We can be a great deal more than nothing to each other. We can be friends and better, Jack."

The note of encouragement fell upon unheeding ears. He shook his head.

"But think a minute, Jack, dear.," she urged.

"I don't want to think. I can't think. It's dreadful, wretched, cruel, hopeless. Why did you ever say you would marry me?"

"Oh, I don't know. How could I know? I loved you so, Jack, and when you asked me, I told you before I thought. I have had time to think since then. Jack, dear."

He pushed her away from him.

"Don't talk to me," he cried in fierce bitterness. "You have broken my heart, and now what can you say for yourself? What can you say that I should want to hear?"

She came close to him, putting her pretty hands on his shoulders as of yore.

"A little something, I hope, dear," she replied, very tenderly. "Listen, Jack: When I told you that I would marry you I did not realize what I was saying. Since then I have learned much. I have learned that you can marry me. Won't that be nicer than——"

But Jack did not wait for explanation and Dorothy did not want him to wait. The strain had become almost too much for her to bear.

"And they say it will be that way when suffragettes come into power," she laughed afterward, when Jack was telling how she had teased him.

* * *

Too Many For Tommy.

Tommy is exceedingly active, causing not only the neighbors, but his parents as well, considerable annoyance. He is always doing things he should not do and always trying to visit when he is supposed to stay in his own backyard.

"Tommy," said mother one day. "Tommy, do you know that God sees everything you do and hears everything you say? He writes it all down in a great big book."

"Does he?" said Tommy with much concern.

Tommy was good for an hour or two, and then the tempter tempted and he started for the neighbor's lot. His little dog followed. Tommy got to the gate, saw the dog and said:

"Gwan, back; you dog."

The dog was not easily discouraged, and after three futile attempts to drive him back, Tommy said:

"Gwan back; you dog., Bad 'nough to have God foller'n me 'round, let alone you."

* * *

Her Idea.

An amusing incident is related of a young service matron who had relinquished her husband for two years, and who, having before his departure insisted on a good photograph, applied herself assiduously to the upbringing of her 2-year-old baby, with a view to the child's familiarity with her distant father. Each day she could call the baby girl to her and kneeling beside her would hold up the photograph, pointing out each feature to the child.

One day the officer came home. And the baby girl, then 4 years old, was summoned.

"Come, dear," said her mother in glee, "papa has come home at last!"

The child surveyed the officer in perplexity and finally shook her head.

"Well, what is the matter, dear?" asked her mother.

"Well," replied the child, "he looks something like my papa, but my papa hasn't any legs."

Caught Nibbling

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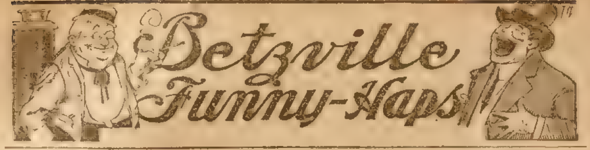

ORONE AND CLEOPATRA

By Ellis Parker Butler

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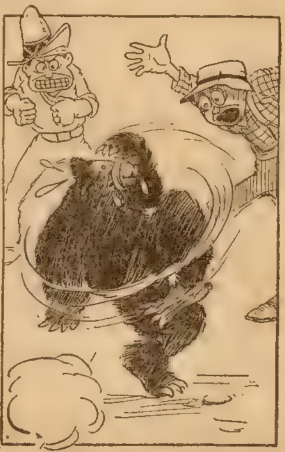
COUSIN ORONE McDOOBLE is one of the most patient men in Betzville, and, as he often says, you can never tell what will turn up if you only wait long enough. He is willing to wait almost any length of time for something to turn up, and it is this marvelous patience that makes him so successful as a trainer of wild animals. For eighteen or twenty years he has been waiting for some one to give him a couple of lions or tigers, and as soon as some one does give them to him, he will undoubtedly train them in a wonderful manner. Cousin Orone also says he is willing to wait considerable time for some one to give him any other animal to train, and that he will then show us something, but up to the present no one has given him any animal whatever. So Cousin Orone has been lavishing his wonderful talent on Cleopatra.

Last Wednesday a gentleman of Italian parentage arrived in Betzville with a painful, squeaky flute, and after wandering through the streets of our burg, put up for the night at the Betzville hotel, and while sitting on the front porch after supper boasted that his bear was ready and willing to wrestle, catch-as-catch-can, with any living being in Betzville, two shoulders to the ground to be a "down." For a while no one in the vicinity seemed willing to take the challenge, and it looked as if the bear would bear away the championship of Betzville. But just then Orone McDooble happened along, and, hearing the challenge, said he was willing to enter a wrestler, on the terms given, and that he would put Cleopatra against the bear in any kind of a wrestle. At once all became excitement on our main street, and the crowd gathered, and there was a great deal of conversation, for none of us had known that Cousin Orone had a wrestler by name of Cleopatra. But Orone immediately took off his coat and vest, and then he took off his shirt, and asked Uncle Ashdod Clute to kindly grab the little black thing that nestled between Orone's shoulders. It seems that Cousin Orone, for many months, has been training a flea, and when not in use, the flea nestles right there between Orone's shoulders. A flea is a splendid nestler.


It was an exciting moment.

As soon as Uncle Ashdod had grabbed Cleopatra, Orone took her in his hand, holding her firmly between his thumb and forefinger, and spoke to her as one man to another. He explained what she was to undertake, and we all expected Cleopatra to look upon the huge bear with awe and fear, but she merely turned her eyes to Orone, as if to say, "Whatever you command, it is my pleasure to do."

"The honor of Betzville is in your hands, Cleopatra," said Orone. "Remember the rules: First down wins; two shoulders to the ground constitutes a down. Go, my darling, and may all be well with you!" Then he set Cleopatra on the ground, and she immediately became lost to sight.

The Italian at first seemed inclined to resent the appearance of a champion that he could not see without a microscope, but upon being duly spoken to, he had nothing to do but allow his bear to wrestle with Cleopatra. He therefore spoke to the bear in these words: "Jacka, you fights da flea! You wrestle da flea! Maka da good fight. Gitta da move on!"

At this the bear stood on his hind legs and prepared to catch-as-catch-can for all he was worth, but Cousin Orone McDooble merely leaned against one of the hotel porch pillars and waited. He said that Cleopatra was probably maneuvering for an opening. The bear seemed surprised, too, for he had nothing to do but stand with his paws out, awaiting the attack. It must be said for the bear that he was willing to wrestle, but he looked as if he would like to know what he was to wrestle with. Suddenly Uncle Ashdod began scratching himself on the leg, and we knew that Cleopatra was indeed maneuvering for an opening. In a minute the Italian gentleman also scratched himself, and we were doubly sure that Cleopatra was on her way.

An instant later the battle became fast and furious. Cleopatra closed with the bear and secured a strangle hold on his ear. She bit him three times, and as he turned to grasp her, she jumped to his nose, bit twice, and slid quickly to the ground. The bear stood on his head, wiped his face with his left paw, and whirled about just as Cleopatra attacked him in the right flank. The bear whirled again, struck himself wildly in the right flank with his left paw, just as Cleopatra took a bite or two out of his right hind foot. The bear danced, and Cleopatra saw her chance and jumped to the middle of his back, bit three times, and moved up between his shoulders.

It was an exciting moment, with the Italian gentleman shouting encouragements to the bear, and Cousin Orone urging Cleopatra on. The bear stood up, and tremenulous waves wiggled up and down his back, while Cleopatra hung on and bit eagerly. Cleopatra bit again, and tears stood in the bear's eyes, but he was still game. Cleopatra bit once more and the bear tried to reach her with both forepaws, and failed. Cleopatra bit again, and the bear tried to crawl under the hotel porch, but was headed off by the Italian gentleman. Cleopatra bit four times in quick succession and grasped the bear with all her legs, shaking him to and fro, and with a growl the bear threw himself on his back, and wiggled. Cleopatra had won!

The entire audience crowded up to congratulate Orone, and he received their kind words with becoming meekness. He said the credit all belonged to Cleopatra, and he called to her to come forward and receive her reward of praise, but she remained modestly in the background. Consternation reigned, for it was feared that Cleopatra might have been lost, but half an hour later Cousin Orone backed up against one of the hotel pillards and began rubbing his back against it vigorously. He then said, for publication, that he was able to announce that Cleopatra was not lost. The Funny-Hap for next week's Ledger will be called "Grandma Pillbeck and the Tin Clock." Read it and laugh.

* * *

Business Honor.

"We women may not know some things, but we have some sense of business honor," said Mrs. Blithers.

"Do you mean to tell me that we have no sense of business honor in public life now?" demanded Blithers.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Blithers, with a superior smile, "facts speak for themselves. Do you consider this business-like? This paper says that 7,000 bills were presented to Congress in the first nine daily sessions. I believe this paper is reliable."

"Perfectly," said Blithers; "but what of it? Suppose 20,000 bills were presented in that time?"

"What of it? What of it?" cried Mrs. Blithers. "You surprise me, even if you are a man. Do you think it business-like to have that number of bills, all in nine days, too?"

Blithers scratched his head in perplexity.

"How would you women stop it?" he deamnded.

"How would we stop it?" said Mrs. Blithers scornfully "Why, we wouldn't have any bills at all. We'd pay cash as we went along"

* * *

Mary's Cat.

Mary had a little cat,
  It warbled like Caruso,
A neighbor swung a baseball bat—
  Now Thomas doesn't do so.

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One Minute Profits—
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6-lb. Portable Post Card Gallery

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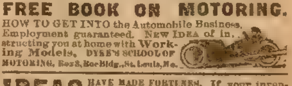
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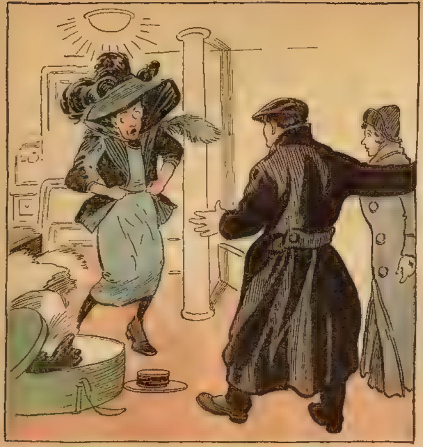


A passenger entering the cabin of a steamer during a storm meets his friend

"But what are you doing in your wife's clothes?" he asks

"Oh, if bad comes to worse the order will be given for the women to get into the boat first"

A Natural Bent.

"Professor," said Miss Skylight, "I want you to suggest a course in life for me. I have thought of journalism."

"What are your own inclinations?"

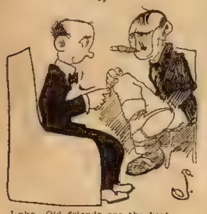
"Oh, my soul yearns and throbs and pulsates with an ambition to give the world a life work that shall be marvelous in its scope and weirdly entrancing in the vastness of its structural beauty!"

"Woman, you're born to be a milliner."

How It Was.

Mistress—How is it that I saw a policeman hugging you in the kitchen last night?

Maid—I dunno, mum, unless you was peekin' through the keyhole



Jinks—Old friends are the best.

Blinks—Yes. They have usually borrowed the limit and stopped.

Cruelty.

Said an advocate of woman suffrage during the recent campaign in California: "A point upon which a great deal of weight has been placed is that women do not want the suffrage and that it would be cruel to impose it upon them. The cry about cruelty to women reminds me of a dialogue that passed between Johnnie and his mother: 'Johnnie, your little sister has been hauling you on her sled for half an hour. Why don't you get off and haul her?' 'Mamma,' said little Johnnie, 'I am afraid she will take cold.'"

Swift Experiences.

"Sometimes a man has a hard time getting finally located in the United States Senate."

"Yes," replied Senator Sorghum "Sometimes a Legislature sends along a man who scarcely gets through reading the word 'Welcome' on the door mat before some one calls his attention to a sign, 'This Way Out.'"

Eccentricities of Fortune.

"Pride has its ups and downs," said one young man.

"Yes," replied the other. "I used to make fun of a friend of mine who tried to sell me a sleigh for $7.25. Now he looks at me with scornful superiority as he takes my best girl out riding."

Life in the Suburbs.

Mr. Suburb—Haven't you a dog to protect your house from tramps?

Mr. Lawnmo—Yes

"Then why do you walk around every night with a gun?"

"Oh, I'm not protecting the house. I'm only protecting the dog"

Honest.

Application for employment was made to a Louisville business man by a young chap from the mountain region of the State. The Louisville man was favorably impressed, but waited until he could personally look into the young man's antecedents. Eventually the Louisville man sought out the sheriff of the young man's home county and asked: "Do you know Bill Sarks?" "Shore, I know him." "What kind of a young man is he?" "Pretty fair." "Is he honest?" "Honest? Shore. Why, he's been arrested three times for stealin' and acquitted each time."

A Chinese Joke.

Bishop Logan Herbert Roots of Hankow stands high with the Hankow Chinese. But he once said that when he first went to China he had a good deal of difficulty in remembering faces. He mentioned this difficulty to a mandarin and said: "I'm getting over it now; but in the beginning here in Hankow you all looked as like as two peas." "Two peas?" said the intelligent mandarin, smiling. "But why not say two queues?"

A Dreadful Blunder.

Mr. Jinks—You look all broke up.

Mrs. Jinks—I am. It just makes me sick to think what a fool I've been. You know that commonplace little dowdy next door that I've been snubbing so?

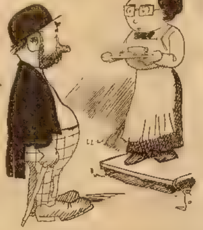
"Yes."

"Well, I've just found out that her husband gets five dollars more a month than you do."

Electioneering Under Difficulties.

Caller (in prohibition town)—Your husband doesn't look well

Doctor's Wife—No wonder. We are right on the verge of a presidential campaign, and he's nearly dead writing prescriptions



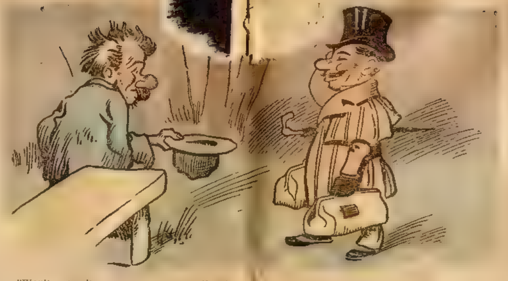
Percy Pikepounder—Yes'm. I wunst had a good job managin' a hand laundry but it failed on me.

Mrs. Goodsole—Poor man! How did it happen to fail?

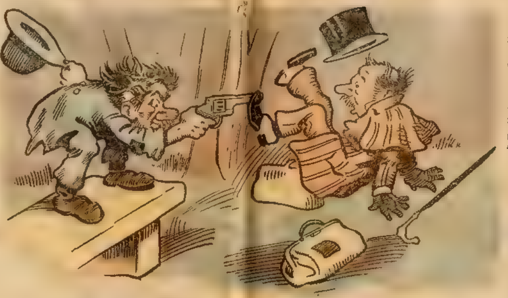
Percy Pikepounder—She left me an' went home to her folks.

His Ball.

The "duffer" at golf becomes used to finding himself in all kinds of out-of-the-way places and learns to expect trouble. Such a player was he who answers in this dialogue: "Is this your ball over here?" "Is it in a hole?" "Yes." "With slightly overhanging banks, so you can't possibly get at it?" "Yes." "Then it's my ball, all right."



"Won't you give a poor man a small gift?"
"I never make small gifts."



Then out with a big one!

Making Things Comfortable.

"I want a pair of squeaky slippers, size tens," said a blushing young lady to a shoe clerk yesterday.

"Who are they for?" he asked.

"For papa, of course. Then George can tell when he's coming."

Routine Resumed.

Master—So you have friendly doings with your brother's people once more?

Pat—Yis, sor. His family and ours do be scrappin' again as if they'd nivir bin parted.

Man's Vanity.

Sillicus—What do you consider the most delicate form of flattery?

Cynicus—Telling a married man he doesn't look it.

In Use.

"Did you get on your knees when you proposed?"

"No; the girl I proposed to was using them!"

His Egotism.

"My constituents never fail to accord me continuous applause," remarked Senator Sorghum hopefully

"Yes," replied Farmer Corntossel. "A lot o' folks out our way would rather hear themselves cheer than listen to another man talk."

Hobo Trial.

"My good man, why don't you look for work?"

"Look for it? My dear madam, it takes all my time dodging it."

Second Thought.

Baker—Whenever I see anything costly I want to buy it for my wife

Barker—Prodigal, aren't you?

Baker—Oh, no; I always control the impulse.

Deciding the Ownership.

"Look, father! There's an apple on our neighbor's tree. If it falls in our garden, whose will it be?"

"Stupid boy! Whoever has the cleverest lawyer, of course."

Making a Hit.

"Mary are you sure that young man you've got in the parlor will make a good husband?"

"I'm certain of it mother, because he is so economical with the gas!"

Not a Visitor.

Mrs. Gadd—That new minister ain't much on visitin', is he?

Mrs. Gabb—No, I guess maybe his wife is a purty good cook herself

Gets His Board Free.

"There was never but one guest at this hotel that stung me while I was on the job," the landlord confided. "Several have beat us, but not while I was awake. But this here feller certainly got one on me. Say, he's livin' here yet, an' he ain't never paid me a cent. Why don't I collect, is it? How can I? Wait till I tell you.

"He's been stoppin' here for near two months when I approached him on the subject of gettin' something on account. He was cheerful. I was polite. Finally I got mad and put it up to him straight. 'Young man,' says I, 'you can't leave this hotel till you pay your bill.'

"'Will you put that in writin'?' says he. And before I knowed what I was doin' I done it!"

A Remarkable Acquaintance.

Gadabout was boasting of his extensive acquaintance. No celebrity could be mentioned unknown to him. He was intimately acquainted with all of them. Finally Dobson inquired

"Did you ever happen to meet the Siamese twins?"

Gadabout reflected a moment, and then said

"Well, I am not quite sure that I met both of them, but I knew one of them very well."

Maternal Opposition.

Her Father—My boy, I like you, and I want you to marry my girl. But have you spoken to her mother about it?

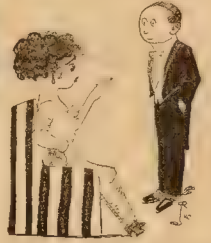
Suitor—No, sir

Her Father—Then, to make it a sure thing for you, I'll oppose the match.

Not Inappropriate.

Giggs—So you attended the lecture by that prominent aviator. What did you think of it

Briggs—He employed a somewhat highflown style. I was looking for something more airy.



Angelina—Oh, dear! the diamond in my engagement ring has got a flaw in it

Edwin—Take no notice, darling; love should be blind, you know

Angelina—Yes, but it don't have to be stone blind

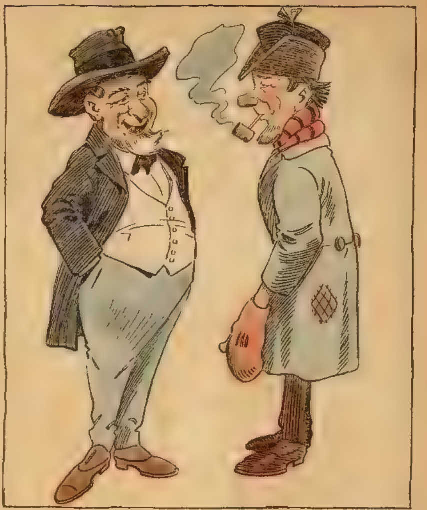
No Great Harm.

"Harold, baby got hold of the ink bottle this morning."

"And what has he done?"

"Spilled ink all over the new rug."

"That can be easily rectified. I thought you were going to tell me that the unfortunate child had written a novel."



First Veteran—So you fought all through the war, did you?
Second Veteran—Yes
First Veteran—I didn't know you were in the war.
Second Veteran—Neither was I. I was at home with my wife.

Taking Things as They Come.

One of Richmond's housewives has in her employ a colored cook who has managed to break nearly every variety of article that the household contains. The mistress' patience reached its limit recently when she discovered that the dusky servitor had broken the thermometer. "Well, well," she sighed, resignedly, "you've managed to break even the thermometer, haven't you?" The maid replied in a tone equally resigned, "Yessum; and now we'll have to take de weather jist as it comes, won't we?"

A Knockout.

Wife (complainingly)—You're not like Mr. Knagg. They've been married twenty years, and Mrs. Knagg says her husband is so tender.

Husband—Tender! Well, he ought to be, after being in hot water that long

A Gentle Reminder.

"Things a bit queer at home I'm afraid. There's your wife sticking her tongue out at you."

"Oh, no. She gave me a letter to post and she's merely reminding me that I must put a stamp on it first."

A Sense of Danger.

"Do you know," said one deer, "the expression in your eyes is positively human?"

"Don't say that," replied the other. "One of these excited hunters may mistake me for a guide."

Didn't Appreciate It.

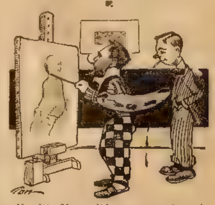
Mrs. Peck—Really, we never know who our best friends are.

Peck—That's true. There's the fellow I won you away from. He hasn't spoken to me since

An Empty Tradition.

"Pop, why are you called the head of the family?"

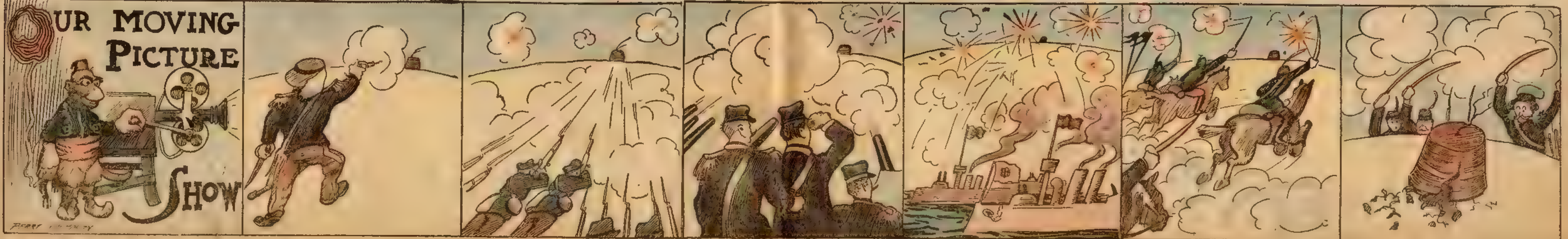
"It is merely a courtesy title, my son."



Hewitt—How did you acquire the ability to draw.

De Auber—Well, you might say I inherited it. My grandfather was a dentist.

THE WAR IN THE EAST.



"There's a Turkish fez! A well-aimed shot and the enemy is conquered!"

"Forward the infantry!"

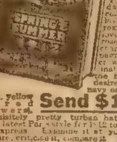
"Forward the artillery!"

"Bring up the battleships!"

"Make a general attack!"

And it was only a red flower pot, after all!

MILLINERY CATALOG FREE



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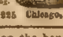

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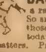

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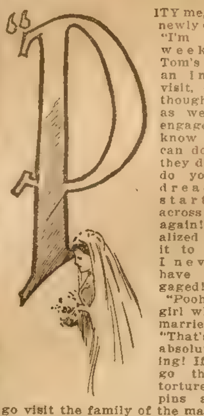
ON INSPECTION.



"PITY me," pleaded the newly engaged girl. "I'm going next week to visit Tom's family! It's an inspection visit, of course, though inasmuch as we are really engaged I don't know what they can do about it if they don't like me, do you? Still, I dread it from start to finish, across and back again! If I had realized that I had it to go through I never would have become engaged!"

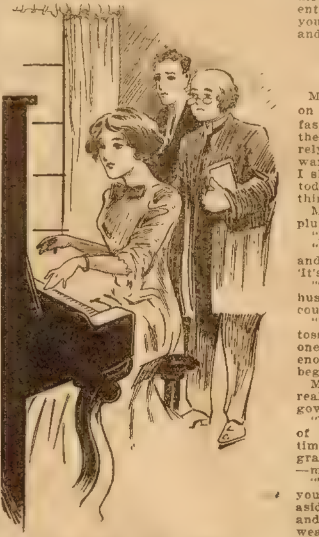
"Pooh!" said the girl who had been married a year. "That's nothing, absolutely nothing! If you want to go through real torture as with pins and needles go visit the family of the man you aren't engaged to, but suspect that you are going to be! You might not break your heart over losing the man if the family made him throw you overboard, but it would hurt your pride. It is a sort of matter of honor to win out.

"I don't suppose there is one man in 10,000 whose family thoroughly and enthusiastically approves of the girl he picks out to marry, because his mother and sisters always have the perfect one already selected, and all the rest of their lives they cherish a grudge against the girl who has upset their carefully laid plans. Never shall I forget the first visit I paid to Dick's family!"

"Were you engaged to him?" asked the newly engaged girl, breathlessly.

"I was not!" said the girl who had been married a year. "Dick always declares that I was, but it isn't so. He may have been engaged to me, but I wasn't to him! He insists that I came to inspect his family, but it was the other way round.

"Frankly I was scared to pieces," related the girl who had been married a year. "I did want to make a good impression, because, even if I decided that Dick wouldn't do, it would have been comforting to have had the family eternally regretting my loss. I wanted to make them feel that if all the girls they had ever fancied for Dick were combined into one the product couldn't begin to equal me. I had just got back from a year and a half in Europe and had the latest things in clothes and hats, so I had some reason to hope that I should make a hit.



"Particularly lively ragtime."

"I arrived late at night and beyond the impression that the house was huge and the family numerous I reached no conclusions. The next morning at breakfast I began to distinguish myself.

"While I had been aboard they had invented several things in the United States, among them one particular breakfast food that was a stranger to me, and when I found the maid offering me a fine assortment of little bales of hay I took one at random because I seemed to be expected to do so. I took it nonchalantly and deposited it upon the plate before me. Then I was offered cream and sugar. Most evidently, I reasoned, one was supposed to put cream and sugar on the small mattress like article

"So I began with cream, I poured and poured, and the cream disappeared from sight. Where it went, I can't imagine, but I know I did begin to think the thing must be a sort of sponge.

"At last when I ceased to pour on cream perspiration was standing on my brow. Then it was that I saw all the members of Dick's family solemnly engaged in tearing their mattresses to bits. They flaked the stuff off and made airy little mounds of it, amid which the cream circled, as it should have done with mine and didn't. They were trying to look no more pained than they could help at my display of ignorance. I nearly choked on the stuff, but I swallowed it.

"When we arose from the table I dashed to the piano to relieve the tension and burst into particularly lively ragtime. I could play, and I played—until I found the whole family lined up most apparently waiting politely for me to finish so they could proceed to the business of the day.

"Dick was nearest me, and he was terribly embarrassed.

"'Would you care to join us?' he stammered when I paused, startled. 'Father always has scripture reading after breakfast.' I was much interested after I got over my perturbation until it came my turn to read—and I got some verses filled with the most complicated proper names in the whole book, over which I stumbled and choked and disgraced myself. Any one might have thought it was the first time I had ever opened the volume.

"I had to have air after that, so I put on some things and rushed out for a walk—and I stumbled and fell the full length of the steps!

"They carried me in and I stayed in bed a week with a wrenched ankle, while the whole family waited on me like slaves, and I simply scorched in the realization that I had disgraced myself utterly and absolutely.

"But somehow or other Dick and I got married finally in spite of it. In a few years I'm going to get up my courage sufficiently to ask my in-laws what they really thought of me that time and what arguments they used to try to dissuade Dick from marrying me. I confess that they have been beautifully resigned about me since they discovered that I was inevitable."

"I wish I was through with it," mourned the newly engaged girl. "I'm entirely convinced that it's worse when you know they know it's a settled thing, and they've got to take you anyhow!"

* * *

The Decisive Work.

Mrs. Compton had laid out four dresses on the guest-room bed, and before breakfast she led her husband to look at them. "Now you know how much I rely on your taste, Henry," she said. "I want you to decide which one of these I shall wear to Mrs. Darnley's luncheon today. Please say exactly what you think."

Mr. Compton hesitated, and then plunged.

"Now that blue," he began, "isn't it—"

"Yes, dear, it is," said Mrs. Compton, and she tossed the blue gown on a chair. 'It's too dark altogether."

"Then's there's the black," and her husband frowned thoughtfully. "Of course——"

"Yes, of course," and Mrs. Compton tossed the black gown after the blue one, "it's handsome enough and light enough, with that gold neck, but it's beginning to show wear."

Mr. Compton breathed heavily. The real test was at hand. A fawn-colored gown and a gray one were left.

"Well, I don't pretend to be a judge of these things," he said, playing for time. "I only know what I like. That gray dress seems to me just a little—er—more—s——"

"There! I knew I could depend on you!" And Mrs. Compton joyfully flung aside the gray gown. "It is more severe, and the style's a bit trying. I shall wear the fawn-colored one, and be so glad to know you chose it for me."

"Whew!" said Mr. Compton, as he fled downstairs. "Suppose I'd been a little quicker and got out that 'suitable.'" It's a lesson to a man to be deliberate when he's giving advice to his wife."

* * *

Butler's Comparison.

"I happened to be in Massachusetts some years ago," said a Pittsburgher, "when Ben Butler was running for Governor. His opponent was a man named Dana. Sitting in the seat in the car with me was a farmerlike man. Getting into a conversation with him I asked about the relative standing of the two candidates.

"'Well,' he said, "the Danas is like the Adamses, and the Adamses is like a hill o' potatoes—the best on 'em is under the ground'"

A Gentle Rebuke.

Daniel Webster's generosity, his love of kindly humor and his genuine neighborliness, appear characteristically in an anecdote recorded by Prof. W. C. Wilkinson, in his recent book, "Daniel Webster." The story is vouched for by Mr. W. T. Davis.

Once, on Mr. Webster's return to Marshfield from Washington, a neighbor called with a bill for hay. Mr. Webster told him that if he would call on the next Monday he would have the money ready for him. After the man left, Mr. Webster said to his son Fletcher:

"I think that I have paid that bill. I wish you would see if you can find a receipt."

Fletcher found two receipt.

"Let those bills lie there," said Mr. Webster, "and when our friend calls next Monday we will have some fun with him."

On Monday the farmer called just before dinner, and Mr. Webster said: "Come, neighbor, have dinner with me, and then we will talk business."

After dinner they went out and sat under the shady elm tree near the house, and after a little general conversation Mr. Webster said:

"Mr. N., do you keep books? I advise you by all means to keep books. Now if you had kept books, you would have known that I had paid this bill once," and he handed him one of the receipts.

Mr. N. was greatly mortified, and charged himself with inexcusable negligence.

After some further conversation Mr. Webster again said, "Mr. N., you don't know important it is to keep books," and handing him a second recepit, added, "if you had kept books you would have known that I have paid this bill twice. Now I am going to pay it just once more, but I don't believe that I shall ever pay it again."

Mr. N., overwhelmed with surprise, protested that when able he would refund the money.

"No, Mr. N.," said Mr. Webster, "you are a poor man, and I know you to be honest. Keep the money, and when you have any more hay to sell bring me a load and I will buy it."

* * *

Involuntary Servitude.

A story that is a house possession at Shoomaker's in Washington, is credited to Mark Twain by the old-timers. It concerned the growth of a temperance movement in New England when New Bedford was famous for its whaling expeditions.

A captain who had finished a two-year cruise and was home apparently for a long stay, was persuaded by his wife to make application for membership in an abstinence society. He consented grudgingly, and had no sooner done so than he was impressed on another cruise through a hurry-up call.

On shore it was one thing, and out at sea it was another, but the captain stuck. He kicked himself for having given his word, and his tongue dropped to his wishbone as he heard all hands piped to grog, the hands doing hornpipes on the way.

The whales were particularly elusive and perverse on that trip and it was nearly three years before the vessel was around the Horn and on the way back. The grog had not given out, and everybody on board but the captain was happy. He decided that this would be his last experience as a sailing teetotaler..

Back in New Bedford the mariner bought as large a demijohn as he could carry and made for the office of the temperance society. He found the secretary, and without preamable said he was tired of the pledge and would resign.

The secretary looked up the record of proceedings of three years before and replied:

"Your resignation isn't necessary, captain. You were black-balled."

* * *

Her One Objection.

A marriage was to occur, and did take place on schedule time. The woman in the case was a most excellent servant, and her announcement to the lady by whom she was employed is here truthfully given:

"Yes'm, I'se goin' to marry Tom next Sunday. Tom drinks some, but he don't never git into trouble, 'cause ef he did I'd never stand 'fore no preacher wid him a hangin' on me. Yes'm, I'se had more men 'sides Tom ask me to marry 'em, but I ain't never been in no hurry to git off, but Tom is 'bout the best chance I knows of.

"Tom don't c'rouse 'round like some niggars, but he mostly tends to his own bizness. Marrying is a powerful serious thing, as you says, but ef Tom will hoe his end of the row I'll tend to mine, an' I spec we'll git 'long 'bout as well as most of the married folks. Lots of gals has been runnin' after Tim, but he says he don't care 'bout none of 'em

"I ain't got but one 'jection to Tim, and that is, he's got another wife, but he says that ain't gwine to cut any figger with me, an' so we is goin' to marry next Sunday."

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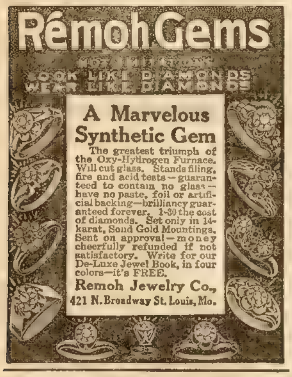

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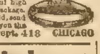

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Farmers Sons Wanted with knowledge of farm stock and fair education to work in an office; $60 a month with advancement, steady employment, must be honest and reliable. Branch offices of the association are being established in each state. Apply at once, giving full particulars. The Veterinary Science Association, Dept. 22, London, Canada.

Snaring Maiden Feet.

(Continued from page twelve.)

tinued, "I've got to go and see Captain Prescott first, and then I'll come to any place you say and put you wise. How's that?"

Rose clutched at Quick's arm desperately. She thought he was too slow in picking up this opportunity.

"Well," Quick replied, "Rose and I were just going into Henry's for a bit of lunch. If you get to us before we're too full to talk, I'll give you my answer."

"I'll be there in ten minutes," declared Marlow. "Save a chicken wing for me. I'm going to fly some—and then some—in this case!"

Quick and Rose took a table in a little alcove and ordered dinner. There was little said for a few moments, and then Rose burst out:

"If Captain Preston's got anything to do with this assignment of Marlow's," she declared, "it sure is Ruth Holme or Malcolm Holme the kid is after. You know what Old Bennett said about hiding the kid away in the woods! What do you think about that million-dollar split now?"

"It's a big watermelon to cut," Quick replied, "but they haven't come to it yet. I see something that looks like the figure of O. Ketchum Quick in the way."

"You're an egotist," exclaimed Rose.

"I don't care what you call me," Quick replied, "if you don't call me too young to become the head of a family. Here comes Marlow now, and we'll soon know whether I'm going out on this still hunt."

Marlow threw himself into a chair at the table, panting, and ordered a liberal dinner.

"I had a job finding Preston," he said, "and, when I found him, he had to talk over the 'phone with Angell, so that took time. I can't tell you now what we're going out after, but you'll soon find out."

He glanced suspiciously at Rose as he spoke, and the girl smiled in his face.

"You needn't tell him now, if you don't want to," she said. "I can wait until he gets back to learn all about it."

Marlow looked from face to face, both blushing faces now, and smiled.

"All right," he said, and the three bent their heads over the table and talked for a long time in whispers.

The continuation of this remarkable story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

Aviation Sicknesses.

The increasing number of aviators and the development of aeroplane flying have given opportunities for making some interesting observations on the physiological conditions incidental to this new method of progression. Several factors have to be taken into consideration. Rising to a great height in the air produces effects similiar to those of mountain sickness—namely, giddiness, nausea and headaches; but owing to the rapid transition from low level to a high one, or conversely, the blood pressure if it is altered is not allowed sufficient time to become steady as it can do in mountain climbing; the conditions, in fact, have some resemblance to those of a balloon ascent or of an abrupt descent, and even more resemblance to what is seen in the case of subaqueous workers who are quickly brought to the surface from a diving bell, although in aviation the pressures are very much less.

There are also great variations with different individuals, for attacks of mountain sickness and other discomforts due to change of pressure are experienced by some at a height of 1,500 meters, while others are not affected until they reach 2,000 meters. All the observations that have been made show that the blood pressure is increased, but only to a slight extent, because it is counterbalanced by the free access of air which, according to the researches of Langlois, tends to reduce the blood pressure. Other factors to be considered are the duration of the flight and the encountering of difficulties. Nervous fatigue lowers the blood pressure and quickens the pulse. The nervous tension brought about by the necessity for being continually on the alert in presence of dangers has a special influence which varies according to the temperament of the individual.

The aviator Beaumont, when he came down from his machine after having won the prize for the European circuit, was remarkably calm and his pulse rate scarcely reached eighty-five, but he said that his great natural composure and his long practice in making ascents did not prevent him from having sensations of emotion and cardiac palpitation in moments of danger. As a general result it may be said that aeroplane flying does not cause any special form of illness.

* * *

Not Yet Labeled.

Boy (in political banner factory)—Wot name goes with this pictur'—Taft or Roosevelt?

Proprietor (after examination)—I dunno. Ask the artist.

FORCE OF HABIT.

On his way home that evening Brill unconsciously felt several times the crackling papers in his pocket. Whenever he did so he swelled out his chest and remembered how relieved and happy and cheerful he was. For the first time since his marriage, which was six years before, Brill was entirely out of debt. He had that day paid the last note the bank held against him.

All those six years he and Ida had been paying for the house. They had bought it to start housekeeping in, in wild defiance of the advice of their elders, who bemoaned their loading themselves with debt at the very outset of their married life. If they wanted to do such a crazy thing, was the general cry, why didn't they go into it more moderately? The idea of two persons with their income purchasing a $5,000 place when one costing $1,200 would have suited their resources so much better!

Their relatives rehearsed the various calamities which might follow their rash venture. If John didn't die he might lose his job and what if either of them should have a long and lingering illness? Besides, both John and Ida were pleasure loving and never in the world would have the moral courage to make the necessary sacrifices.

In the first enthusiasm of having such a nice house to live in the debt did not loom ominous.

"Why," Ida said gayly. "It's so perfectly splendid, having this instead of a stuffy four-room flat like everybody else has that I shan't mind giving up things a bit!"

That was at first. When days followed days they began to look at each other seriously over the papers covered with figures. They loved the theater and now they had to give it up. In fact, they had to give up almost everything they had enjoyed, even their friends. If their friends entertained them it meant that they must entertain in return.

Life resolved itself into a grim struggle to make their payments. Ida's clothes got shabby and Brill learned to walk by a cigar case and keep his eyes straight ahead. They learned to stay at home evening after evening and they took to reading aloud as a diversion and to the multiplication table and long division as a necessity. So it had been a long hard struggle and now Brill was glad it was ended.

"It seems queer," he said at dinner that night for the dozenth time, "to think that it's all over—that we haven't got to scrimp and pinch and save money for anything special! We can have a better time now!"

"We'll enjoy life," Ida said dreamily, resting her chin on her clasped hands. "Think of all the things we can do!"

"Well, what shall we do?" asked Brill.

His wife regarded him with a puzzled look.

"Why, I don't know," she said, slowly. "All the things we've wanted to and couldn't since we were married, I suppose. And it will be fine not to have the worry."

They stayed at home that evening, fitfully reading and discussing the fact that they were out of debt and removed from the necessity of scrimping. When Brill started downtown in the morning he remembered to throw out his chest as he descended the front steps, for did he not own his home and have his full salary to spend?

They had a fine time for a while discussing the treats they would have. They did go to the theater and they bought some new clothes and Ida joined a literary club. But after a while Brill grew restless.

"I don't know what's the matter with me," he said. "I guess it's just nerves. I don't feel right. Something seems wrong somehow."

"There doesn't seem much to do," his wife agreed. "I can't get up an interest in anything."

They grew silent and abstracted. Brill developed a habit of idly making marks with his pencil on the blank pad of paper on which they had done their figuring during the past year.

One night he came home late to dinner a little breathless, but with a light in his eye. He spoke rapidly and almost defiantly.

"I suppose you'll be furious at me," he said, "but I ran across a good investment where property is bound to go up and I've bought a small store building for $7,000 with six years to pay the mortgage and——"

"That's splendid!" interrupted his wife, excitedly. "We can do it just as well as not! I've thought of a new way to cut down our expenses and I'm dying to try it! It'll be fun to plan again and feel that we're really doing something!"

"Well," said her relieved husband, as he reached for the pad of paper, "it does seem to give one something to live for to be honestly in debt again and have to fight to get out!"

* * *

Prospects.

"Have you no prospects at all?"

"Oh, yes, I have prospects, all right. One of my relatives stands a fine chance of marrying a rich woman for her money and if that goes through we'll be on easy street.

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Whatever you want for your home can be had at once, *on credit*. You can pay as convenient, a little each month—by saving a few cents daily.

This means Furniture, Carpets, Draperies, Dishes, Refrigerators, Baby Cabs—everything. Our Bargain Book pictures over 3,000 articles.

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American Woolen Mills Co., Dept. 465 **Chicago**

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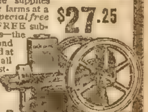
ALTON WATCH & MDSE. CO., Dept. 1837, Chicago



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5 H. P.

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Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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500 Dearborn Avenue.

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Advertising rate $2.25 per Agate Line, per insertion, for advertisements in The Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

A man hasn't any use for a dog unless he owns it.

Kicking at a bill is an unsatisfactory way to foot.

A man with a high aim in life seldom carries a gun.

A wise man always knows when he has had enough.

Birth is an accident from which some men never recover.

One way to not please a woman is to let her do as she pleases.

Some people love to tell the truth—when they think it will hurt.

You know how your neighbor ought to live, but can you show him?

Many a man has bumped into trouble while trying to dodge his duty.

Matrimony would please some people better if spelled matter of money

If a girl is popular with men it's a sure sign she isn't with other girls.

A man is sure to sit and take notice when his wife tells white lies in company.

He's a poor preacher who tries to make up in length what he lacks in depth.

Lots of things would go without saying if women would give them half a chance.

The woman who suffers in silence usually manages to make a lot of noise about it.

Only a fool ever attempts to convince a man that he isn't as clever as he thinks he is.

Don't allow yourself to be carried away by enthusiasm—unless you have a return ticket.

Every woman loves to talk, but it isn't every man who can induce her to say what he wants her to say.

It is easier for a man to learn things than it is for him to make a lot of money out of what he has learned

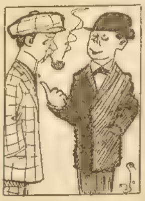
A girl may not marry the best man at her own wedding, but she should try to make the best of the man she marries.

When we encounter a man who is long on words and short on works we wonder how much his wife earns by taking in washing.

It takes an awfully clever man to dodge the leap-year widow who has appointed herself a committee of one to induce him to face the parson with her.

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Pat Scores.



An English tourist, who was telling an Irish peasant about the immense size of the British Empire, said:

"Well, Pat, and do you know that the sun never sets on the King's dominions?"

"No, your honr," replied Pat.

"Well, such is the case," went on the tourist. "But do you know the reason why?"

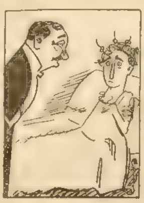
Pat immediately answered: "I suppose it is because Heaven is afraid to trust an Englishman in the dark."

A Fair Offer.

Old Gentleman—Do you think, sir, that you are able to give my daughter all the luxuries to which she was been accustomed?

Suitor (a practical man)—Well, you have been paying for her board and clothes, and I have been paying for concerts, theaters, operas, and so on. Now, I'll pay for the board and clothes, if you foot the amusement bills. I don't think she'll miss anything.

It Looked That Way.



One morning a man walked into his club smiling and said: "B-b-boys, I'm afraid I t-t-took m-more wine last n-n-night than a ch-ch-church member should t-t-take."

"Why so?" said one of his friends.

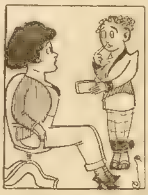
"Well, you s s see, this m-morning, when I c-came to b-b-breakfast my wife s-s-said to me: 'William, what was the m-m-matter with you last n-n-night? You stood beside the b-b-bed for some time l-l-looking at me and finally s-s-said: "Well, I-s-swear you two girls look enough alike to be sisters."'"

Needed Soon.

A landlord received a letter last spring from one of his tenants which read:

"Dear Sir—Please send some one to fix our bathtub. It leaks, and and it is nearly time to begin using it again."

Business Is Business.

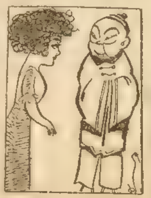


It was the year 1999. The young lady whirled around in her office chair. "So you want a permanent position as my husband?" she said briskly to the young man who stood before her, hat in hand.

"Yes; I can bring you first-class recommendations from every wife I ever had. Here they are." He drew out a package of typewritten letters from an inside pocket.

"Well, you can leave them. I'll look over them when I get time." She jotted down a few items in a notebook. "I'm sorry, Mr.—— er, what did you say your name was? There isn't any opening at present, but vacancies sometimes occur unexpectedly. At present I have a husband who has been with me for six years and has always given satisfaction. But I'll file your application and put your name on the waiting list. Good morning."

Turn About Is Fair Play.



A young married woman recently had a novel experience when she engaged her first Chinese cook

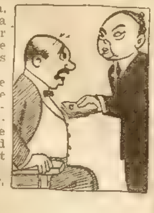
"What's your name?" she asked when the preliminaries had been settled.

"My name Hong Long Loo," said the Celestial with much gravity

"And I am Mrs. Harrington Richard Buckingham," said his new employer. "I am afraid I shall never be able to remember your name—it's so long. I shall call you John."

"All right," returned the Chinese with a suspicion of a smile. "Your namee too longee, too. I callee you Charley."

Spencer's Chinese Client.



The "Knave" in the Oakland Tribune has published several anecdotes about the late Dennis Spencer of Napa, who was noted as a law-maker, orator and lawyer. The following story is particularly good

One day there entered his office in Napa a bright-looking, well-dressed Chinaman. He took a chair and proceeded straight to the point:

"You Mr. Spencer, the big lawyer?"

"Yes."

"How much you charge to defend a Chinaman?"

"For what crime?"

"Murder."

"Five hundred dollars."

The Chinaman said he would call again.

A few days later he returned to Spencer's office, gravely placed $500 in coin on the desk before the astonished attorney, and said:

"All lite. I kill 'im."

Spencer defended and acquitted him.

Shortened the Time.

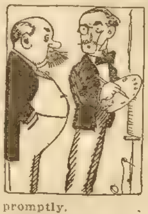
Friend—Doesn't the ride back and forth in the country every day seem long?

Mr. Suburb—Long? It's too short. When I take the train in the morning, I know I've got to pitch in and work like a horse the moment the train reaches the city. That makes the ride seem too short, doesn't it?

"I presume it does. But how the ride back?"

"Well, I always remember after I start that I've forgotten something my wife wanted particularly, so that ride is always over too quick."

Oil in Stock.



Robert Henri, the eminent New York painter, was talking about those millionaires who buy, merely to show off, doubtful "old masters" at fabulous prices

"Their knowledge of art," Mr Henri said, "is about equal to that of the sausage manufacturer who said to Whistler:

"'What would you charge to do me in oil?'

"'Ten thousand,' said Whistler promptly.

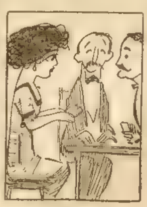
"'But suppose I furnish the oil?' said the millionaire."

Put to the Proof.

"There's always room at the top," said the hopeful dreamer.

"Yes," replied his wife, "and that reminds me that it would be a good idea for you to go right up and shovel the snow off the roof."

Brutal Thomas.



The worm-eaten chestnut of all "proverbs" is—well' you know what it is—"Unlucky at cards, lucky at love." If your bridge partner is a bit flirty she always goo-goos at you and springs it Then she leads you away to a secluded spot. You know Tommy Treathinger was the only one we ever knew to beat this game, and that was an accident Here was the way of it:

"Are you very lucky at cards?" asked the woman.

"Very," said Tommy. "I always win."

"How about love?" she continued, looking arch and kittenish.

"Lucky again," plunged Tommy—"I always lose."

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Want and Classified Advertising not less than 14 words accepted for insertion in the Ledger and Blade at 25 cents per word

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WANT ADS

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WANTED—Active man in each locality. To join this Society. And introduce our Memberships. Sick, accident, death benefits. All or spare time. Make $50 to $500 a month. Write. Box LH-293, Covington, Ky.

PARAGON Shorthand learned in one week because remarkably simple. Speed practically unlimited. Used in Government service. Details free. Lichtentag, 5100 Camp, New Orleans.-Louisiana.

FREE Illustrated Book tells about over 300,000 protected positions in U. S. service. More than 40,000 vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Easy to get. Just ask for booklet A1034. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

WANTED—Young men and women to act as Official Reporters; good pay; all or spare time. Nothing to sell; no canvassing or correspondence school. Experience unnecessary; applicants must be energetic and reliable. Send stamp for particulars. Rokwell Service Co., 303A Boudeman Bldg., Kalamazoo, Mich.

WANTED Railway Mail Clerks. Average $90.00. Rapid advancement. Every second week off duty with full pay. Short hours; no 'layoffs.' May examinations everywhere. Common education sufficient. "Pull" unnecessary. Farmers stand excellent chance. Write for free sample questions and schedule showing examination places. Franklin Institute, Dept. A 81, Rochester, New York.

WANTED—500 Men for Secret Service in United States, Cuba, Philippines, Guam and Hawaii; 10c brings proposition. Address Secret Service, Box No. 201, Martinsville, Virginia.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

LADIES can make shields at home; $10 per 100; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Particulars for stamped addressed envelope. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

AGENTS

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THE DREAM GIRL.

Herbert Dayton was feeling very blue and low in his mind, so blue in fact that as he stood on the rear platform of the last car of the express thinking of the rapid rate at which he was leaving the girl of his dreams, indigo would have seemed lily white in comparison.

When a man has been ordered to a far off western territory to sell goods just after one glimpse of the girl he has been looking for the country over, the girl for whom he will remain a bachelor forever unless she will consent to make life an earthly paradise for him, then, as he told himself, he has a right to be low in his mind.

"Suppose in his absence some other fellow should——" he whispered with a shudder.

"But, avaunt, blue devils," added he bravely, "in that direction madness lies!"

At this period of his bitter musing, the gloomy mood began to pall on young Dayton's usually optimistic nature, and he looked about him for something to distract his thoughts.

Inside the car in the chair nearest the door reclined a delicate, sweet-faced woman evidently unaccustomed to traveling and sick from the motion of the train. Her husband was ministering to her tirelessly, devotion in his every touch, while she glanced up at him frequently with an expression of extreme tenderness upon her face.

"By jove," Herbert exclaimed aloud, as the man turned for a moment toward the rear of the car, "if that model Benedict isn't the one time gay and festive James Halstead."

Then Dayton's eyes traveled to the next seat. And there just behind the Halsteads sat a girl dressed in blue! Her beauty, her daintiness, would have of themselves compelled a lingering glance, but besides all these attractions she was the girl of his dreams, the very girl he had seen in his home town three short days ago, the very girl of girls he had been looking for north, east and south, only to find her where he least expected it—in a train going west!

The color of his thoughts changed instantly to a more roseate hue. "How can I make her acquaintance," he questioned. He was so absorbed in making and discarding plans to this end that he forgot all else. He even failed to hear the first call for luncheon; the second, however, succeeded in arousing him.

He immediately passed through the car, empty now of all but the sick woman, to the diner just beyond, only to find every table filled except the one at which sat the girl in blue.

He was gazing longingly at the vacant place when suddenly he became conscious of a sobbing breath close beside him. He turned. It was the sick woman standing there staring straight at her husband, her face colorless with surprise and pain.

Halstead was seated beside a girl with whom he was having an animated and confidential conversation. It was plain to any onlooker that, for the moment, he had forgotten everything and everybody save the one to whom he was talking The girl was evidently an acquaintance of his bachelor days.

His wife staggered back to her seat in the other coach and Herbert followed to render her any assistance that might be necessary.

After Mrs. Halstead was seated, he started again eagerly, hopefully, for that vacant place beside the girl of his dreams, only to meet her returning to her seat in the parlor car.

And though he had lost his appetite as well as his heart, he kept on into the diner and did the best be could. Afterward he was making his way through the car to the rear platform when Halstead stopped him.

Mr. Halstead had, it was plain to see, been unsuccessful in reassuring his wife, and he looked extremely miserable.

"Hello, Dayton," he said; "I have just been telling my wife that you are as unfortunate as she in being train sick, and that I had to take Mrs. Dayton into luncheon for you. No, do not thank me, old fellow, I was glad to do it."

And he turned to Herbert with such a look of appeal in his eyes that the young man's natural impulse to deny his statement died a sudden death.

"I can never repay you for all you and your family did for me when I was ill in New York," continued he, piling it on in a way that he knew would be irresistible to his wife. "I want Jennie to meet Mrs Dayton some——"

Before this ingenious prevaricator could say more the train began to move slowly into a station, and Herbert was forced to make way in the aisle for the passengers crowding out.

He had retired to his old vantage point outside the car when the girl in blue, instead of going forward to alight from the car as the custom is, [illegible] to the door of the rear platform. She paused there until the train stopped Suddenly she looked up, saw Herbert, and an expression of scorn came to her face that made the poor fellow's blood run cold

She had, he knew instantly, overheard Halstead explain his former girl friend to his his wife, and, of course, she must have guessed he had been, tacitly at least, a party to deceiving a trusting woman.

And was this to be the end of his long search, his dreams, his dearest hopes? Plain killing was too easy a death for the prevaricating Mr. Halstead.

He started forward to give that gentleman a generous piece of his mind when, glancing up, he saw that he was again administering to his wife, and that a look of peace and happiness had come into her face. This banished at once and forever all regret in him that he had been a party to the fraud.

Just then the train stopped. The girl came out on the platform and was passing Dayton with unseeing eyes when the train gave a sudden lurch.

She staggered and was about to fall when Herbert caught her, but in doing so he lost his balance and was thrown from the car. He fell to the concrete walk below and lay there unconscious.

When he opened his eyes he was reclining on a couch in a beautiful room, and a kindly middle-aged man was placing a bandage about his head.

"He will be all right by tomorrow," this man, evidently a doctor, was saying, "and can safely proceed on his journey."

"Tomorrow!" exclaimed the young man. "I shall proceed on my journey tonight"

At that moment a vision in blue appeared in the doorway.

"Is he better?" asked the dream girl softly.

"Doctor," murmured Dayton. "I shall not be able to leave tomorrow. I must first change a look of scorn into kindness, then to friendliness, then to——"

"He is delirious," said a hitherto unnoticed white-haired gentleman who was standing near the couch on the opposite side from the doctor.

"No," answered the medical man, with a shrewd twinkle in his eyes, "not delirious, only dreaming, but his case has assumed unsuspected complications and he may not be able to leave tomorrow."

"Thank you, doctor," whispered Herbert.

The happy ending of his dream of winning the one girl was in sight and a beatific smile illumined Herbert Dayton's face.

❧ ❧ ❧

What He Wanted.

"Darling."

"Well, Henry?"

"Are you going to be very busy tonight?"

"You know I am. This is the night our Neighborhood Literary Circle meets."

"Well, how about tomorrow afternoon?"

"Tomorrow afternoon our Bridge Club meets."

"Dear, dear! Then how about Tuesday evening?"

"Tuesday evening I'm going to read a paper before the Suffragette Society."

"I'm sorry. Will you be engaged on Wednesday evening?"

"I shall. Our church Missionary Society holds its annual meeting then. I'm the president, you know."

"How unfortunate—er—not that you are president. It's unfortunate that you will be engaged. Do you expect to be at home Thursday evening?"

"I do not, Henry. The Woman's Uplift Society meets on Thursdays, and on Friday I have promised to serve tea at Mrs. Swelkid's musicale. But what is it you want, Henry?"

"Oh, nothing! I merely thought if you were going to be at home some night soon I'd get you to sew a button on my trousers, but, perhaps I can find a tailor to do it whose time isn't quite so taken up as yours."

The Best I Know

The Car That Marks My Limit

By R. E. Olds, Designer

Reo the Fifth—My Farewell Car—marks the climax of my career.

It shows the best I have learned in 25 years spent in building cars.

In every detail it marks the best I know.

The tens of thousands of men who have faith in me will find a car here that deserves it.

My 24th Model

This is the 24th model which I have created. I spent 18 months in perfecting it.

My whole idea is to give the best that is possible, regardless of cost or profit.

For Reo the Fifth is to be the car by which men will remember me.

The Utter Care

For this car all steel is analyzed, to know it accords with my formula.

For this car the gears are tested in a crushing machine of 50 tons' capacity.

For this car I use Nickel and Vanadium steel. For this car I use roller bearings—Timken and Hyatt. There are only three ball bearings in the whole car.

For this car the Carburetor is doubly heated to deal with low-grade gasoline.

All that is best in modern practice is embodied in this car.

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Reo the Fifth has been built to endure, under the hardest conditions. The margins of safety are extreme.

The axles and driving shaft are much larger than necessary. The differential was designed for a 45-h. p. car.

Tests and inspections—thousands of them—guard every step of the making.

I ran one of these cars for 10,000 miles, night and day, at top speed, on rough roads. And hardly a sign of wear could be found in any important part of the car.

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I have also made this a luxurious car. The body is finished in 17 coats. The lamps are enameled. Even the engine is nickel trimmed.

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In this car I bring out my new center control. There are no side levers in the way of the driver.

The gear shifting is done by a cane-handled lever, between the front seats. It is done by moving this lever less than three inches in each of four directions.

Both brakes are operated by foot pedals. One of the pedals also operates the clutch. Never was a car so conveniently operated.

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We are trying, if possible, to sell this car at $1,055—the initial price. My opinion is that this price is too low. I believe that it must be advanced.

So this price is not fixed. Our contracts with dealers provide for advance.

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Ask us to mail them. We will tell you then where to see the car. We have dealers in a thousand towns.

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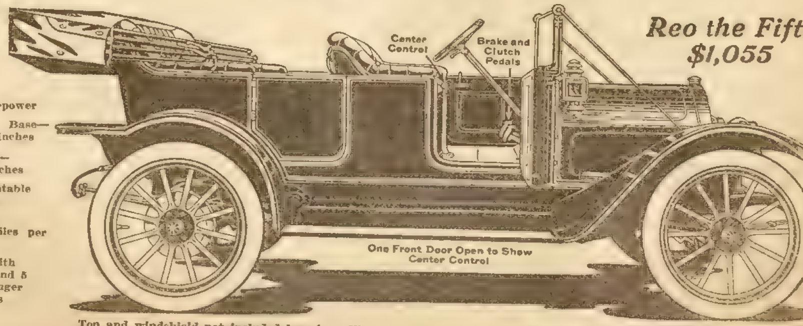
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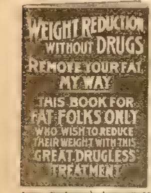

My friends were charitable and called it **Obesity**; others said I was **stout**, but it was just bulky fat. I was miserable; so are you if too stout. To reduce your weight, you must do as I did. I FOUND THE CAUSE—THE REST WAS EASY. Before I succeeded, I tried everything within and beyond reason. It was maddening, disgusting. All I had to do was remove the cause, and I guarantee, that by my safe, sensible, natural treatment, **without violent exercise**, starvation diet, straps, belts, cups, wires, [illegible], sweating, electricity, soap, salts, pills, oils, cathartics, drugs or medicines of any description, I reduced my enormous weight quickly and without harm to myself while taking treatment or afterwards, and I guarantee that you can reduce little or much fat with this same treatment. If interested in your own happiness, health and figure, you will let me tell you how to reduce fat "Nature's Way," the true way—my way. BETTER GET RID OF FAT BEFORE FAT GETS RID OF YOU. It is astonishing the thousands of grateful letters I am receiving. J. E. Boiselle, Box 422, Great Bend, Kan., lost fifty pounds. W. L. Schmitz, Montevideo, Minn., lost 30 pounds, and Mamie McNelly, Desloge, Mo., lost 65 pounds. Mrs. Daisy Smith, Los Angeles, lost 164 lbs. safely with my drugless treatment, and I can refer to thousands of satisfied patrons. My book, entitled: "Weight Reduction Without Drugs," is sent free and prepaid and tells of my successful treatment with which you can permanently reduce your weight, secretly, and without harm. **I offer $5,000 if I fail to prove my great drugless treatment anything but safe, quick and harmless in fat-reduction.** Write to-day for my free book.
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ENJOYING THE PLAY.

"I BROUGHT two handkerchiefs," said the girl whose hair was done up in an exaggerated psyche knot. She spoke proudly as one who makes it known that she has thoughtfully prepared for all emergencies.

"Wish't I had," said her friend, enviously, as she jingled her chatelaine bag into a safe place. "Eva said this play was perfectly excruciating and there wasn't a dry eye in the house—though how she could swear to that I don't see, for of course she couldn't go around looking at everybody, could she? That's what I don't like about Eva—you can't depend on what she says."

"I really oughtn't go see a play like this," said the girl with the psyche knot, shaking out handkerchief No. 1. "I'm too sensitive! I sympathize so with others and it just breaks my heart to——"

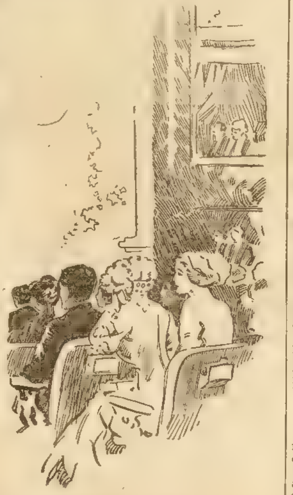
"There goes Sadie," said her friend in a shrill whisper, clutching her arm. "Down the side aisle—with the feather. Doesn't she know that willows have gone out? Who's it with her?"

The girl with the psyche knot turned solemn eyes upon the questioner. "If it isn't Tom!" she got out. "And the last time I saw her she said that she'd never have anything more to do with him if he was the last man on earth!"

"Wait till I get hold of him!" gurgled the girl with the chatelaine. "Didn't I call him up yestiddy and ask him to drop in this afternoon and we'd take a walk—and didn't he say he was sorry, but he had to work? Slighting me for Sadie! I bet she ast him to bring her to the matinee today! I'd never hint such a thing if I died for it! Of course, most any man if you ast him to go walking would suggest dropping into see a show or something, but that's his business."

"I'm going to get some chocolates," said the girl with the psyche knot. "Yes, I am—you got some the last time. I like these soft, squashy ones, don't you? There goes the curtain!"

"I simply can't talk," declared the girl with the psyche knot, at the end of the first act. "I never was so affected in my life. It was all I could do to keep from crying and I didn't want to because I knew this act couldn't be half as sad as the rest and I didn't want to get started so soon!"



"I knew you'd like it."

"It's the next act that's the worst," explained the girl with the chatelaine. "Isabel went and she said she just cried on Harry's shoulder. She said she couldn't help it, and she didn't care if people did see him put his arm around her to quiet her!"

"Pooh! Isabel would weep at a plate of breakfast food if she could get Harry to make love to her," commented the girl with the psyche knot. "It's all make-believe with her. It's different with me—I feel so intensely that it makes me downright ill. I'm all used up after a play like this—there goes the curtain!"

"Wha'd I tell you?" triumphantly whispered the girl with the chatelaine five minutes later. "Ain't it just heart-rending?"

"D-d-don't t-t-alk!" sobbed the girl with the psyche knot, sopping her eyes. "It is perfectly awful, it is so sad! I can't stop the tears."

"I knew you'd like it," pursued her friend in a satisfied tone. "Listen to that!"

"It's just dreadful!" wept the first girl. "W-w-will you g-g-get m-m-my other handk-erchief-f-f, dear? I am so blinded I can't see!"

"Try to control yourself," said her friend, sympathetically.

"Mm-most people c-c-ould," replied the weeping one, "but I am so tender h-h-hearted! Isn't it nearly over? I simply can't stand much more of it! I never saw anything so beautifully sad, did you?"

"Aren't you glad you came?" demanded her friend. "If it hadn't been for me you'd have gone to that old comic thing instead of to something where you really could enjoy yourself!"

"Mercy, I'm glad that act's over!" said the weeping one, giving her face a final dab.

As the lights went up there was a startled scream from the girl with the chatelaine bag and every one near turned around to look. Then they laughed. The girl with the psyche knot sat red eyed and unconcerned.

"I thought something awful had happened to you at first," said the girl with the chatelaine bag. "People's hair turns white from grief or shock, so I thought complexions might change the same way—in your excitement you've been mopping your face with the hand you held the chocolate creams in, instead of the one with the handkerchief!"

⁂

Mother Registers.

"Is this where voters register?"

"Yes, ma'am, this is the place."

"Well, I guess I'll let you put my name down."

"Very well, madam; your full name, please?"

"Land sakes, do I have to give you all of it?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And tell my real age, too."

"Certainly, madam."

"Well, it's a shame to expect a woman who doesn't look a day over 40 to have to say she is 57, but that's it."

"Where were you born, madam?"

"Goodness sakes alive! Do I have to tell that, too?"

"That is one of the requirements."

"Well, I was born four miles and a half north, no, a little east of north of Joplin, Mo., on the old County turnpike road that runs through——"

"That isn't necessary, madam. Now what precinct are you in?"

"Precinct? What's a precinct?"

"Don't you know what a precinct is, madam—and don't you know what Assembly District you're in?"

"Gracious sakes alive, no. I ain't no politician, young man."

"Well, you'd better get a little better posted, madam. Here, sign your name in full just as you gave it to me."

"On this line here?"

"No, on the line below."

"I can't write with my gloves on."

"Then you'll have to remove them, madam, and kindly hurry; there are others waiting here to register."

"Well, it seems to me that there's an awful lot of red tape, or whatever you call it, about this registerin' business. I declare to goodness if I'd known I'd had to go through all this rigmarole——"

"All right, madam, now raise your right hand while I swear you."

"Don't you swear at me, young man. I'm a respectable, God-fearin' woman—Oh, you want me to take an oath, hey? Yessir, it's all true, every word of it, and may God have mercy on your soul if you ain't put it down c'rect. All right, young man, good-by."

⁂

How to Be Happy.

Friend—Doesn't your husband kiss you when he goes off to business in the morning?

Hostess (who had been married before)—I never let him.

"Mercy me! Why?"

"So that in after years I shan't have any excuse for feeling blue when he goes off and forgets it."

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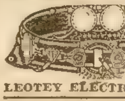

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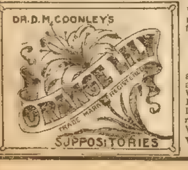

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GOING AWAY.

Mrs. Minton was dusting her best cut glass bowl—the Browning Club's wedding gift to her—when a bird alighted on the window sill and sang its sweet song. At the same moment a girl walked past wearing a bunch of sweet peas in her belt. Instantly Mrs. Minton realized that she was homesick for the garden and the birds that had been here every year of her life until this year, and she decided she would go see the garden and the birds and the dear own home she had not seen since her wedding day.

In the course of the day Mrs. Minton wavered several times in her intention, thinking of her husband. Who would care for Jack during her absence? She found herself wiping a tear away at the vision she conjured up of her husband coming into the silent apartment to spend interminable, lonely evenings without her. Still, she could talk to him on the long distance telephone and she would only stay away two days at the most.

When Minton came home to dinner, his wife broached the subject that had been uppermost in her heart all day.

"Go by all means," Minton answered cheerfully. "I've been surprised that you've stuck it out as long as you have, Bess. It must be lonesome for you here. At home, there was always one or another dropping in to see you. When will you go?"

"But you will be lonely without me, dear," Mrs. Minton said tremulously, looking across the table with sweet, troubled eyes.

"Not a bit of it," Minton said reassuringly. "I'll look up some of my old friends that I haven't seen since I was married."

There was a moment's silence, then Mrs. Minton said slowly: "I've heard people joke about husbands being anxious to have their wives go away so they might have a good time. But I'm not in the least jealous of you, Jack.' I made up my mind when we were married that I never, never would be jealous. While I'm away, I want you to go around and have a perfectly splendid time. You know I'm a woman of my word, and I mean what I say when I tell you I'm not jealous. You must go and see all your old friends, and the more you enjoy yourself the less regret I shall feel at leaving you alone."

"I'll have a great time," Minton laughed. "But don't look so tragic about it, Bess. Maybe I'll go out and maybe I'll stay at home. Whichever I do you can be certain I'm thinking of you and wishing you back, yet at the same time hoping that you'll stay as long as you feel like it and that you are enjoying yourself."

This loverlike speech caused Mrs. Minton to take heart.

The next day, before she left home, she pinned a tender little note on her husband's pillow, inserted a second in the book he was reading and slipped a third into the pocket of his house coat. Then she buried her face for a moment in the coat, and with one last, lingering look left the house.

When seated in the elevated train her attention was attracted to two women who took seats near her. The elder, a woman in tan, observed as she sank into the seat nearest the window:

"Dick called up before I left home. He's going to bring Jack Minton to dinner tonight. Mrs. Minton has gone home to see her folks. I never met her—I was out of town when she gave her "at home"—but I have my opinion of a new wife who will forsake her husband [illegible]"

"Poor little thing! It's the most natural thing in the world for her to want to run home and see her mother," laughed the other. "She must be lonely here in the city."

"Jack won't be lonely while she's away," the other said. "Phyllis Bartlett is visiting next door, and she's coming to dine with us tonight. Jack used to be awfully attentive to Phyllis, and she thinks he's about th——"

Mrs. Minton felt that she could listen to no more. When the train stopped she grabbed her valise and rushed out.

Minton dined with his friends that evening, escorted his old sweetheart home, and then went on his way wondering why every other woman seemed so unattractive compared with his wife. He let himself into the apartment with his latchkey, turned on the electric light and gasped at sight of a crumpled up little figure asleep on the lounge. In a moment, he was beside his wife.

"Bess, wake up! What's the matter? Are you sick?"

Mrs. Minton opened two heavy, tear-stained eyes. "I'm so glad you've come, Jack," she said. "Have you had a good time?"

"First-class. But what——"

"With old friends?"

Jack nodded his head. "But what——"

"Not any one you could ever care for more than you do for me?"

"Of course not, Bess. But what a foolish question to ask me! It almost sounds as if you were jeal——"

"Now, you are foolish, dear, after my telling you that I never, never would be jealous. It was just that I—I couldn't bear to leave you alone, Jack."

* * *

Matters of Importance.

"I suppose, Miss Fannie," said Mrs. Harris to her newly arrived guest from the country, "that you have a good many errands to do here in the city? Some shopping, perhaps?"

"Well, I'd like to look round the stores some and see if things are much handsomer than the things we have at the Waybridge stores, but I don't know as I'll do much shopping. I've always traded in Waybridge and I guess I always will. But I've got some errands that I'm quite set on doing. For one thing, I want to visit the Art Institute and look at the Venus with the broken arms and the Victory without a head that the lady who stayed at my house last summer talked about when she gave what she called an art evening in the town hall.

"It didn't seem to me that those mutilated images would be worth looking at, but she said they were wonderful, so I just want to see for myself. And then I'm planning to go to the Public Library and get out the magazine with the end of a story I never finished. Some folks who were staying with me a good many summers ago left a lot of that story in some magazines and I've always been wishing to find out what became of the poor misguided girl in it."

"And is that the extent of your business in town?" smilingly inquired Mrs. Harris.

"There's one more thing I'd like to do, and that is to go to the place where father bought my sewing machine. I want to tell the head man there that I never was able to use the tucker attachment. It used to just about vex the life out of me. Of course I wouldn't use it any now, even if it did work, for I haven't done any fancy sewing for more than fifteen years, but I think the manager of that machine company ought to know that tucker was dreadfully unsatisfactory."

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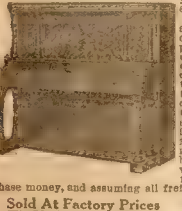

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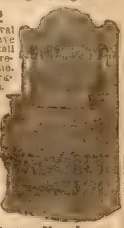

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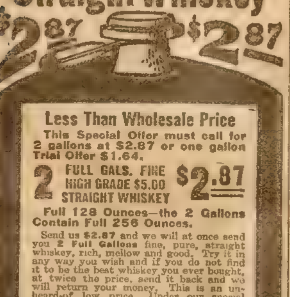

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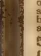

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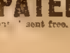

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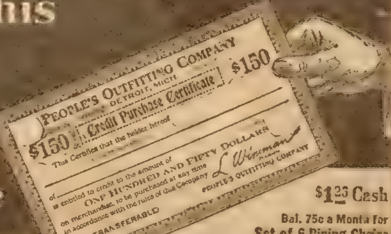

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The Boy Detective; Or, The Great Morgan Mystery

By Weldon J. Cobb

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CHAPTER I.

HUE AND CRY.

"STOP that man!"

A shot, a cry, a general commotion, and in a single instant of time a crowded, bustling city street was transformed into a seething center of excitement and confusion.

"Head him off! The man with the green satchel!"

Crack! a second pistol shot.

The man with a green satchel, now a darting streak of action far in advance of a dozen nimble pursuers, had turned the street corner at a leisurely, natural gait sixty seconds before. At the junction of the two thoroughfares stood a police officer. As the man with the satchel turned the corner, a keen-eyed, ferret-faced man close on his heels swayed toward the officer in uniform.

"Arrest that man—he is a thief," came the low, quick mandate.

The policeman stared sharply at the speaker. Then he touched his cap, as though saluting a superior officer. He made a quick spring, and placed his brawny hand on the shoulder of the man carrying the satchel, with the startling words, "I want you!"

Quick as a flash, spry as a fox, the pedestrian shot one swift glance at his challenger, then at the man behind him, jerked free, and wings of fleetness seemed to propel his feet.

"Halt!" shouted the officer, drawing out his revolver, and starting in pursuit of the fugitive.

"Halt, or I'll fire!" came the second hoarse, menacing declaration.

Crack! crack! Twice the leveled weapon spat out a sharp discharge. Then, stumbling over a loose bowlder in the street, the officer went flat, his revolver flying into the air twenty feet away.

The shots had gone wild, and the runner had never relaxed his rapid gait. The man who had directed the arrest now took up the chase. He had thrown back the lapel of his coat, disclosing the seven-pointed badge of his authority as a member of the metropolitan secret police service.

All the time, the detective who had shadowed the man with the satchel had in turn been shadowed by a lithe, well-appearing youth, who had kept him in sight constantly. At the outcry this lad had instantly sprung into vivid action. With a bound he had outdistanced all of the pursuers. Leaping over the prostrate body of the police officer, even overcoming the lead of the detective, he was soon in the van. A superb runner, he resembled some crack sprinter in a Marathon.

"He's after him hot and heavy!"

"Got him?"

"No, not yet—aha!"

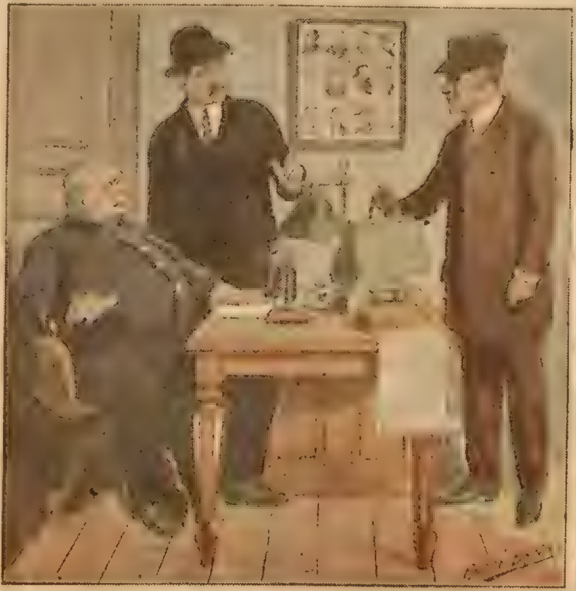
Various exclamations of encouragement and excitement accompanied the flight. The boy was gaining perceptibly. He gradually lessened the distance between himself and the man with the green satchel. Forty, thirty, twenty, ten feet away, and with a prodigious swing he brought himself fairly upon the fugitive. His hand outstretched to seize his flying coat tails, when a sudden thing happened.

Apparently the man in the lead had never looked around. That he was shrewd, wary, and not unused to clever, shifting methods, a sharp abrupt movement now showed. Without giving the warning of an instant to his pursuer, he suddenly threw himself flat.

The boy reached him, struck him, stumbled, and slid fully twenty feet. For a moment he lay inert as though stunned. When at length he arose, his face was confused and his hands bleeding. His glance scanned his surroundings critically. Near by was an alley. Just disappearing into its mouth was the object of his interest.

"Stop thief!"

The voice of the lad rang out in clarion tones. It was sufficient to arouse to co-operation half a dozen men who were lounging in a doorway at the corner of the alley. They were spry and fresh for the chase, but the lad outdistanced them all. The only effect of the general pursuit was newly to alarm and hasten the fugitive.



"The green satchel!"

Just where the alley circled, the fugitive shot a swift, sharp glance backward. There was here a short lane cutting into the direct alley. The pursued man rounded this

Crash! Evidently the fugitive believed he was out of sight of his nimble pursuer, for the space of a minute, at least. Satisfied that he had "planted" the satchel, which constituted incriminating evidence seemingly, he now ran on with redoubled speed. He leaped the fence and disappeared from sight.

The boy had heard the crash. Even before its echoes had ceased, he had seen the satchel leave the hand of the fugitive. It described a speedy parabola in the air, struck an old cobwebbed window, and vanished through this, making a great gaping fracture in the sash.

The boy halted. He looked up to view a gaunt, dilapidated building. Then, as the shouts of the pursuing crowd neared the spot, he drew into the shelter and shadow of the old structure. Gazing thence, he saw a dozen men, then the detective, then two uniformed policemen rush by on the alert hue and cry.

It took the lad about three minutes to locate the room with its broken light. Its door hung on dismantled hinges. The apartment was dimly lighted and unfurnished. Long since it seemed to have been given over to decay and disuse.

He made out the satchel and seized it, came out to the doorway, saw no one in the immediate vicinity, and crossed the street watchfully to where a lot of sheds and barns lined the alley. Into one of these he penetrated, ascended to its loft, hid the satchel in a corner under

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some hay, returned to the street, and—waited.

Standing in the middle of the alley posed like some indifferent actor upon the scene, he watched the pursuers returning, one by one, empty-handed from a fruitless search. He allowed them to pass on unquestioned, but on the alert to hear any conversation going on. From this he was enabled to learn that they had scoured all the back yards in the vicinity, and that the fugitive had made good his escape.

The detective came last of the returning group. The boy watched him keenly as he approached. The man's face was vexed and disturbed. He was evidently chagrined at his failure to capture a man he had shadowed too long, hoping he would lead him to accomplices. He had reason to feel depressed, for he was familiarly known as "Ferret" Wooldridge, the crack detective of the local detective force, a man who had the reputation of having never lost a criminal he went after. The watching lad stepped in front of him, as the detective neared the spot where he stood.

"Mr. Wooldridge," he said

The detective lifted his thoughtful downcast eyes. He scanned his challenger swiftly, frowned, and said indifferently:

"You again, Bob Archer, eh?"

"Yes, sir," nodded the lad, respectfully, and with a certain dignity that lent impressiveness to his grave tone and earnest face.

"Bound to get in trouble, I see," went on the sleuth

"I hope not, Mr. Wooldridge."

"You will, if you insist upon mixing up in police business. See here, my lad," continued the speaker, in a kindlier tone, "what is the secret of your persistency? Especially, why do you bob up constantly along my line of duty?"

"I have told you already that I am anxious to do some detective work," explained young Archer. "They told me at headquarters that you were the most expert and successful secret man of the day. To learn a business you must have a skilled teacher. Isn't that logic?"

The detective laughed lightly, but evidently was secretly pleased at the high compliment bestowed upon him.

"Well, well," he said, "it's human nature, I suppose. You are making a mistake, though, my lad, in trying to break into the hardest of work, the most intricate of tasks."

"I understand all that, and would be willing and glad to show my mettle. Can't you give me a start, a show, Mr. Wooldridge? Suppose I was able to prove my ability by giving you a hint, a pointer, a clew that would lead to the arrest of the man who has just escaped you. Would it influence you to try and bring me to the notice of the detective bureau?"

"A clew?" repeated the detective, pricking up his ears, his keen professional sense instantly aroused to bristling energy and excitement.

"Yes, sir," responded the boy, confidently

"Can you do it?"

"I think I can."

"See, here," proceeded the detective, briskly, "the man I was after, Cracksman Blue, is wanted for the big La Salle burglary. We have been working on the case for two weeks. The case involves over $30,000 in diamonds. I was shadowing him, hoping to get on the track of the plunder. To catch him probably means its recovery. Now, then, what do you know about the case?"

In his professional fervor, the great detective's magnetic eyes bored the boy before him like gimlets.

"You want the man?" inquired the latter.

"Rather."

"Very well, Mr. Wooldridge," said Bob Archer, quietly, but with forceful confidence, "come with me."

Somehow the famous sleuth was impressed. He followed his guide into the old dismantled building. The latter led him to the broken door, pointed beyond its threshold, and said positively: "Cracksman Blue will visit that room before midnight."

CHAPTER II

THE GREEN SATCHEL

Ten o'clock in the morning at police headquarters, the usual bustle and activity of the hour in the secret service department of the force, the detective bureau.

Furtive-eyed men being led into the office of the lieutenant, out of it, and into the cells below stairs. Bedraggled and desperate looking women standing before this and that inquisitorial desk. Officers hastening to and fro with this and that person. Here was a man whose pocket had been picked and a small fortune taken. There a handsome, pale-faced young fellow just arrested for his first crime of forgery

The babel and hubbub toned down to a hushed hum, as a man came out from the private office of the chief of detectives. Curiosity, admiration, dread ran all the gamut of human emotions, as this man, "Ferret" Wooldridge, cast an eagle glance at the motley group filling the apartment.

"He's made the catch of the year—Cracksman Blue," whispered a subordinate officer to his companion.

"So I've heard," was the mumbled reply, and the speaker glanced somewhat enviously at the famous sleuth, who, with equal dexterity, could snap the handcuffs on the biggest bruiser of the slums, or gracefully slip a diamond bracelet on the dainty wrist of a duchess.

Wooldridge was about to pass on to the outer corridor with his fearless, self-reliant step, when he halted somewhat curiously, regarding a stranger who nodded to him. The man was a typical Jew—bent, long-bearded, with half grace, half servility, making a familiar salute with his hand

"Know me, do you?" remarked the detective, in his usual offhand fashion.

"Fery vell, goot Mishter Voolpridge," came the strong nasal reply, "exceedingly vell, mein frient."

The detective turned, as a passing lieutenant addressed a brief query to him. Then, again confronting the Jew, he gave a bewildered start. Before him, the subject of a marvelous transformation, stood—not his Hebraic companion of a minute previous—but, clear-eyed, youthful-faced, his eyes twinkling somewhat with satisfaction—Bob Archer

For an intsant the detective was disconcerted. Then he said heartily: "You did that well, my lad. You fooled me completely, and that is a big thing to say. Distinctly—you'll do. Shake!"

In a friendly, fatherly way Wooldridge grasped Bob's hand.

"I suppose you have heard?" he inquired quickly.

"About your catching Cracksman Blue?"

"Yes."

"I knew you would."

"See here, how did you know it? No, you needn't answer. The chief is just as curious and anxious to know as myself. Come with me."

The chief! A faint flush crossed the face of Bob Archer. His breath came quickly. Into his fine expressive eyes arose the glow of an emotion, akin to that of a person who confronts the most fateful moment in his life experience

The chief! Bob Archer, crossing the threshold of the private office of the great head watchman of the city's league of crime, stood awed and hushed in the august presence of a noble-looking man, erect, clear-eyed, with features resembling those chiseled on some classic Roman coin. He heard Wooldridge say: "Chief, this is Bob Archer."

The chief extended a hand, smiled, and then motioned his visitors to chairs beside his desk.

"Be seated, gentlemen," he said, urbanely. "This is Bob Archer, whom you were telling me about, is it, Wooldridge?" and Bob felt those piercing eyes read him through and through.

"Yes, chief."

"The boy detective, eh?" preceeded the chief, in a tone half-earnest, half-bantering. "Well, Archer, I guess you have made good. Outside of your share of the reward, what else can we do for you?"

"The reward?" repeated Bob, questioningly.

"Yes, the thousand dollars offered for the apprehension of Cracksman Blue?"

"Oh," replied Bob, lightly, "I have no interest in that. The reward belongs to Mr. Wooldridge. He knows what I wish, sir. The motive—the desire of my life is to do detective work."

"Why?"

The word was a sharp, mandatory challenge. Keen, far-seeing man that he was, while his visitor was speaking, the chief had noticed in the quiver of the boy's lips, in the sudden earnest gravity of his eyes, even in a certain ominous sternness in his tone, something under the surface, something beside the mere caprice of a foolish lad who had caught the detective fever.

"Because—because"—the tones of the speaker quivered. His companions watched him breathlessly. It seemed that he was on the verge of a tragic declaration. Then his face was set like steel, and he simply added—"because it it my fate. You say I have made good by assisting in the capture of Cracksman Blue? I will do better. Open it."

All the time Bob Archer had carried under one arm quite a large oblong package done up in manilla paper. This he had suddenly placed on the desk at the side of Wooldridge. The latter regarded it curiously. The chief shared his interest as he cut the string and unfolded the paper covering.

"The green satchel!" unrestrainedly burst from the lips of the astonished detective.

"Zounds!" was all the chief could articulate, as with active fingers the detective pulled the fastenings of the satchel apart

A spectacle was revealed that might well amaze and fascinate the two eager onlookers

"The La Salle plunder," sopke Wooldridge in an intense tone. "Boy, this is—wonderful."

"How, when, where did you get it?" challenged the chief.

"It is a simple story," replied Bob Archer, and he told it. "I held back the plunder till this morning, thinking that if Mr. Wooldridge failed to catch Cracksman Blue, this would serve for an excuse to bring myself to your notice. There was no particular smartness on my part in the proceeding," admitted Bob, modestly. "My only hope is that it may induce you to give me—employment."

The chief studied silently the face of

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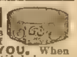

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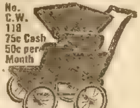

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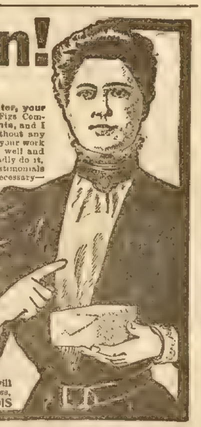

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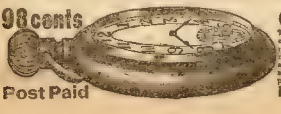

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the speaker. He was thinking deeply. Finally he spoke out.

"Archer," he said, "you are too young to meet the requirements of admission to the force, but I want you. I am satisfied that you are earnest, honest, and that you will be efficient. You have won and deserved our approbation in a signal way. I appoint you on the special list, to be paid out of the contingent expense fund."

"I thank you, sir, from the bottom of my heart," said Bob, every nerve thrilling with earnestness.

"You can remain about the office for a day or two, studying the rules and methods of our system. Then I will assign you to some specific work. There is something that will interest you. I make you free to familiarize yourself with our records and—our secrets."

"I shall respect the confidence, sir," declared Bob, in a tone of deep feeling.

The chief had opened a door leading into another room. He ushered Bob across its threshold and closed the door after him. Then, alone with his trusty aid, he turned his glance upon Wooldridge. The latter was inspecting the glittering opulent contents of the green satchel.

"Chief," he cried, "this is a famous catch!"

"That is a remarkable youth," said the chief. "Wooldridge, who is he?"

The famous detective shrugged his shoulders.

"Nobody knows," he replied. "For weeks he has hanging around headquarters, some of the time shadowing me. I regarded him as one of those harmless cranks anxious to break into detective service."

"He is not that."

"No, he has proved some coherency and value to his pretensions."

"A remarkable boy," spoke the chief, pensively. "Wooldridge, I don't altogether fathom him. Mark me, that lad has some motive far deeper than vanity inspiring him in his zeal to join the profession."

"Then what can it be?"

"Time alone will show, but remember what I tell you—Bob Archer is a boy with a mystery."

CHAPTER III.

THE BOY WITH A MYSTERY.

"At last!"

With that breathless ardent aspiration, Bob Archer stood shut into the room that contained the treasured secret archives of the detective department of a great metropolis.

Any one looking at his pale, excited face, the flashing, restless eyes roving hungrily about the room, would have likened him to some storm-tossed mariner long buffeted by adverse wind and wave, now arrived at last in port.

It seemed as though, a boy of mystery, indeed, this strange youth had reached the acme of long intent and purpose. It was a peculiar apartment, that in which he stood. At one side was a bristling armory, containing a sample of nearly every known weapon of assault and defense, from the stilletto of the crafty Italian to the latest magazine revolver of the desperate "gun man."

Beside it was a second case, filled with burglars' tools. There were brass knuckles, sandbags, picklocks, jimmies, the celebrated "drag," that formidable device, which, once set on the latest-devised steel-chilled safe, can be operated by a child so that it will eat its way inch by inch through the stoutest wall of metal plate, tearing to fragments the filling of the safe chambers as though it were mere waste tissue paper.

Only a flashing glance, however, did the young detective bestow on these curios and momentoes of many a famous crime. Bob passed swiftly over to a broad frame. Suspended from hooks, upon a velvet surface rested the stars and shields once worn by honored, retired or dead members of the detective bureau. One of these had its face turned to the wall. With trembling fingers Bob reversed it. It was a regular detective badge and was numbered. Down in one corner of the tarnished surface was a name: "Richard Lyon."

Bob's lips compressed. A stern, sad look came into his eyes, as he placed the badge of authority as he had found it. Then he went over to a bookcase. Its contents were initialed. He selected one bearing the letter "L." Taking it to a table he sat down, consulted its index, and found the page therein indicated, and had before him the life record of Richard Lyon.

Richard Lyon! A name to conjure by in the years long past. What a record! Richard Lyon, "Old Marvel," famed the world over for his deeds of skill, daring and bravery! Here was a list of his marvelous untangling of mysteries that had baffled Scotland Yard and the Parisian police. Reward after reward, honor after honor, and then——

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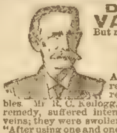

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Dudley Lane. I have him in charge. He is the murderer, evidence conclusive. Expect me on the morning Express."

Days, weeks—no Old Marvel, no Dudley Lane. Then little hints, discoveries. The matter was traced in the city, whence the great detective had wired, where he had deposited $100,000 in a bank, drawn it out, bought a disguise, an elaborate tourist outfit, and—vanished.

No clew to Dudley Lane. He too, had vanished. The inference was plain: Richard Lyon had sold his fair name and fame for a big bribe. China, Africa, Japan—he had retired with the price of his honor to enjoy a life of luxury and—forget.

Then, a disgraced man, his badge had been turned to the wall, and his blasted record in the police archives ended with the mournful chronicle: "Dishonorably discharged."

The brow of Bob Archer darkened. His bosom heaved. Then he went to another set of records, selected a book, and opened it at a page devoted to Dudley Lane.

There was a picture of the man. This he removed and placed in an inner pocket of his coat. Then he read the description of the man: "Nose bitten off in a brawl—marked for life. Left foot has two webbed toes. Eyes a pale blue. Almost albino lashes. Bertillon measurements"—these followed. The description ended with the laconic statement: "An exile, or dead."

The lips of the lad moved incessantly, as though over and over again he was memorizing the description of the criminal. Finally he returned the book to its place and went to the table. He brought his clenched fist down upon the open page that held the record of Old Marvel.

"A lie!" he hissed. "A lie to disprove, if I have to move the world to accomplish it!"

He closed and replaced this volume where it belonged. Then he took up again the metal badge once worn by Rihcard Lyon.

A stern, solemn expression came into the face of Bob Archer. Lovingly, reverently, it seemed, he held the badge to his lips for the space of a moment. Then, his right hand raised, his eyes uplifted, he said slowly, earnestly, as though recording a secred oath:

"My life motive is before me. I swear to be tireless, devoted, loyal. I will prove of the innocence of this brave, misjudged man, or I will die in the attempt. Now for action!"

His face clearing and his expression changed to hide all traces of the vivid emotion of the preceeding half hour, the young detective passed into the outer room.

He hoped for action, but it did not come at once. All that day and the one ensuing the chief kept his "new man" busied with office details solely. Bob felt those studious, penetrating eyes, fixed upon him every move he made. The chief conversed frequently with him, always on professional topics. That he was interested in his youthful novice, his patience and efforts in familiarizing Bob with the routine of the department showed.

It was about eleven o'clock, two nights later, when the night clerk, dozing at his desk, started into electrically aroused attention as the wall telephone gave out a sharp sudden call.

"See what it is, kid," he said to Bob.

The latter was the only person in the room except the night operator. Bob went to the 'phone and picked up the receiver.

"What is it?" he inquired.

"Central Station—police headquarters?" came over the wire in rapid, frantic, ejaculation.

"Yes."

"Quick—listen, act!"

There was a pause. The voice at the other end of the wire was vague and indistinct, as though its owner was at a considerable distance. For all that, Bob recognized the soft, silvery accents as belonging to some young girl.

"What is it?" he repeated, as the voice did not immediately resume.

"Oh, do not delay!" came the quick, sharp words now. "It is a matter of life and death."

"I do not understand.

"It is murder——"

"Murder?"

"Yes."

"Where—how?"

"Oh, listen!" The speaker seemed to be in a frenzied state of incoherency and terror. "Go—send at once to 27 Rossiter Building!"

"Yes."

"A man there answering to the name of Morton. Warn him, protect him, bid him fly for his life."

"Why?"

"He is is deadly peril. This night a ruthless enemy is on his track, and seeks to kill him."

Bob thrilled at the tragic, graphic message. It was unusual, unreal, out of the ordinary, yet somehow he felt that there was deep fervor in the wild, appealing tones of the distant signaler.

"We will act at once," he said.

"Oh promise, promise—not an instant's delay!"

"Yes, but how do you know this?"

"I dare not tell."

"Dare not?"

"No."

"Where are you? Who are you?" persisted Bob.

"I am——"

There was a quiver, a slight jangle to the instrument, and then——"

Wonder of wonders! For, whereas the day had been fair, the night was cloudless. As Bob had seen, a few

(Continued on page twenty-seven.)

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Please send me letter of advice and your Book for Women, **all free and postage paid** —without any obligations on my part whatever.

My Name..

Post Office..State..............................

Age?..............How long afflicted?.........................Are you married?..............

Make a cross (X) in front of the ailments from which you suffer. Two crosses (XX) in front of the one from which you suffer most.

......Constipation
......Nervousness
......Headache
......Dizziness
......Pain in Back
......Stomach Trouble
......Female Weakness
......Bearing Down
......Painful Periods
......Fainting Spells
......Whites
......Change of Life
......Kidney Trouble
......Bladder Trouble
......Womb Trouble
......Ovarian Pain
......Hot Flashes
......Itching Parts
......Cough
......Catarrh
......Piles
......Obesity
......Skin Disease
......Impure Blood
......Rheumatism

☞ *Describe any other symptoms on a separate sheet if you wish.*

Strikes Both Ways.

Daughter—I just read in a paper that girls who learn to play the cornet, clarionet, flute, or trombone develop the prettiest and cutest dimples in their cheeks that——

Father—Yes; but think of the wrinkles they develop in everybody else.

Poor Jennie.

Here is a remarkable excuse: A Wichita child who had been absent from school brought back the following excuse when she returned: "Dear Teacher: Please excuse Jennie. She was sick, and had to stay at home to do the washing and ironing."

Avoid Blends! Send us your order for Hayner BOTTLED-IN-BOND Whiskey

You KNOW it is good and pure—the Government's Green Stamp over the cork is your protection.

NO MATTER what others may promise —no matter how tempting their offers may seem—*see* if they offer *Bottled-in-Bond* whiskey —and remember—there is only one way you can be *sure* of getting pure, straight whiskey — and that is to *insist* on Bottled-in-Bond.

FULL QUARTS
4
$3.20
IN STRONG SEALED CASE
WE PAY EXPRESS CHARGES
HAYNER
PRIVATE STOCK
WHISKEY
BOTTLED IN BOND
THE HAYNER DISTILLING COMPANY

That's what we offer you—Hayner Private Stock Bottled-in-Bond Whiskey — rich, pure and delicious — shipped in *sealed* case—Direct from Distillery—and all it costs you is $3.20 for FOUR full quarts—express charges paid.

There's no question about a whiskey like *this*—the Government's Green Stamp over the cork is *your* assurance that it is Bottled-in-Bond—fully aged, full 100% proof, full measure — and a *guarantee* that it comes to you just as it left the distillery, in all its original purity and goodness.

WE WANT you to TRY this whiskey on our guarantee you will find it all we claim—as fine as you ever tasted — and the best value you ever saw —or you may send it back at our expense— and we will return your money.

Remember — you take no chances. We take all the risk—and we stand all the expense if we fail to please you.

No letter is necessary—
Cut Out and use this Coupon and address our nearest office

THE HAYNER DISTILLING CO.
Enclosed find $3.20 for which send me FOUR full quart bottles of Hayner Private Stock Bottled-in-Bond Whiskey—express paid—as per your offer. It is understood that if this whiskey is not found as represented and satisfactory to me in every way, it may be returned at your expense—and my $3.20 is to be promptly refunded. G-30

Name ______________________

Address ______________________

____

Note the price—only 80 cents a quart—delivered. Where else can you buy a Bottled-in-Bond whiskey of this magnificent quality at this price.

Orders for Ariz., Cal., Colo., Idaho, Mont., Nev., N. Mex., Ore., Utah, Wash. or Wyo. must be on the basis of 4 quarts for $4.00 by Express Prepaid or 20 quarts for $15.20 by Freight Prepaid. 9-N

THE HAYNER DISTILLING COMPANY, Dept. G-30

DISTILLERY
TROY, OHIO
Established 1866

Dayton, O. St. Louis, Mo. Kansas City, Mo. Boston, Mass.
St. Paul, Minn. New Orleans, La. Jacksonville, Fla.

CAPITAL
$500,000.00
Full Paid

HOME AND FASHION

Colors and Fabrics.

The raven's wing serge is quite the color of the hour for useful wear and for the most part is richly braided. Ratine is being used for cuffs, collars and belts with all kinds of dresses, especially with gray, the ratine white. Purple gowns are in vogue and often trimmed with purple; gray dresses with cut steel trimmings. Velvet gowns were never more worn, especially in green or royal blue, many buttons finding a place on waistless gowns.

Barbaric belts emphasize some of the more stylish dresses and Russian embroidery is enlivening the winter dullness of many of the gowns. Gold and water blue are being made up in combination for evening wear, the skirt bordered with gold and a narrow edging of fur. A great secret in good dressing, now and always, is not to run into extremes of fashion. Long sailor collars with square, elongated fronts are worn on many dresses and large buttons on the coats carry out the same idea. Draperies are frequently carried down from one hip to the opposite knee, the two sides of the bodice different, with three-quarter sleeves. Ecru crash toweling as trimming for blouses is one of the latest notions.

Old Custom Revived.

As in old days, when people went out to tea, it is again quite the smartest thing to take a dainty little bit of needlework in a fascinating handbag. This fashion has been set by Queen Mary, who has always near her a piece of knitting or other stitchery. Since she was a girl her majesty has always been the best and most industrious worker in the royal family. It is a matter of comment outside the royal circle that the dainty bit of needlework which some smart women take to their friends' houses never shows any advance, though they adhere religiously to her majesty's example.

Needlework.

Hemstitched tableclothes and napkins can be nicely mended when the hemstitching breaks by fagoting the edges together with a strong thread. This will last as long as the article.

Before hemming new napkins or tableclothes it saves much time and trouble to turn the hems by means of the machine. Adjust the hemmer and simply run them through, without needle or thread, thus creasing the hem more evenly and quickly than could be done by hand.

Cross stitch work continues to hold its own. A table scarf done in this work had a central design of a conventionalized flower basket with a border embodying motifs of the same pattern. The materials for this work are not expensive, it being carried out in linen with a cotton floss.

Pouch bags are cut with an oval bottom, covered with black velvet on one side and a bright colored satin on the other. The top, which is joined to the bottom without fullness, is finished on top with black satin ribbon. It is lined with the satin. The top has a draw string of satin ribbon through a casing, long enough to hang over arm. The lining may be in coral, green, burnt orange or royal purple.

Darning Hints.

Do not darn garments that are very much worn. It is sheer waste of time. If they must be mended for a little longer wear add patches.

In mending plaids or checked materials several shades of silk threaded into one needle give good results. These must harmonize with the chief tone of the material.

In darning take pains to match the cotton or silk used. Remember that threads work lighter and that the sheen of silk often makes the repairing too conspicuous.

For a bad tear in a long glove cut off the top of another old glove and set underneath. Turn in the edges and hem with small stitches. This holds better than a darn and shows less.

Ravelings of the material are good for darning, provided the thread used in the work and woof is smooth and does not knot or break. Frequently a thread of a different character makes far neater work.

For the Housewife.

The kitchen cupboard should never be permitted to get untidy, and should be scrubbed out at least every fortnight; the lower shelves oftener.

After an umbrella has been used for a short time put a drop of oil in the center of the top about once a month. This prevents the ribs from rusting.

Dates stuffed with walnuts and then dipped in melted chocolate make a delicious bonbon. Among a saucerful of such dates have, for variety's sake, a few that are stuffed with raisins and dipped also in chocolate.

Silver dress trimmings which have become discolored may be cleaned by covering them with dry powdered magnesia. Leave it for three hours, then rub it well with a flannel and brush off with a perfectly clean plate brush.

Mint may be grown in winter in the kitchen and be at hand quite fresh at all times to pluck for sauces, soups and the like. Put a dozen sprays of mint in water in a stone jar, and add water from time to time to keep the jar filled. Pick sprigs often from the tops, and new shoots will grow in continually.

A Tempting Treat—

Post Toasties

with cream

Crisp, fluffy bits of white Indian corn; cooked, rolled into flakes and toasted to a golden brown.

Ready to serve direct from the package.

Delightful flavor

Thoroughly wholesome!

"The Memory Lingers"

Sold by Grocers.

Postum Cereal Company, Limited,
Battle Creek, - - Mich.

MENS COMPLETE OUTFIT

HANDSOME NAVY BLUE SERGE SUIT SWELL STRIPED WORSTED TROUSERS AND DANDY SAFETY RAZOR $4.95

Safety Razor FREE

Until they're gone we will sell 15000 year around weight navy BLUE SERGE MEN'S SUITS at $4.95, and as a premium and advertisement we will give FREE with each suit at $4.95 a pair of *fancy stripe worsted trousers*, and if you order within 30 days we will throw in as a special premium with the suit and extra trousers at $4.95 a highly nickeled, full-size *safety-razor*, guaranteed to shave as perfectly as any $5.00 safety razor, regardless of name or make.

The Suit is Daly's best navy blue serge, a handsome firm fast color fabric of perfect weave and beautiful changeless finish. It is stylishly made up by expert tailors in latest single breasted sack style to fit perfect, is serge lined, elegantly finished. Guaranteed the greatest clothing bargain in the world or no sale. Sizes 32 to 42 inches around breast.

The Free Trousers which we give with this suit at $4.95 are made of beautiful dark, fancy striped worsted, are stylish, finely tailored and perfect fitting. This is the most astonishing and wonderful clothing offer ever made. We openly challenge any firm to equal it.

Send $1.00 deposit, mention No. X 41, give chest measure over vest, waist measure over trousers, length of inseam and height and weight, and we will send the fine navy blue serge suit and extra pair of fancy striped worsted trousers and fine safety razor by express, subject to examination at the express office, you to pay the balance, $3.95 and express charges, after you examine the clothes and find them perfectly satisfactory, a perfect fit, the greatest clothing bargain you ever saw, and as stylish an outfit as there is in your neighborhood; otherwise we will promptly refund your $1.00. Order the outfit today or send for our big cloth sample book (BE SURE and ASK FOR BOOK No. 27) which contains 100 fine cloth samples of ready-made suits at $3.98 up, trousers 98c up, slip-on raincoats $4.50, cravenettes $6.00, and complete stocks of hot weather clothing, such as alapaca coats, dusters, auto coats and all kinds of men's and youths' clothing for Summer wear. Order the outfit or write for the sample book No. 27 today. Do it now, if you need

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SMYTH'S SPECIAL
SAFETY RAZOR
JOHN M. SMYTH COMPANY
SAFETY RAZOR
J.M.S. CO

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Men's Furnishing Goods send for our FREE CATALOG OF MEN'S FURNISHING GOODS. Mesh underwear 19c, silk neckwear 8c, stiff hats 96c, soft hats 42c, dress shirts 35c, gloves 19c, belts 15c, caps 19c and every kind of apparel for men and boys.

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At Your Home. Write today for our booklet. It tells how to learn to play Piano, Organ, Violin, Mandolin, Guitar, Banjo, etc. Beginners or advanced pupils. **AMERICAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, 17 Lakeside Bldg., Chicago**

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W. C. WATKINS, Parnassus, Pa.

$3.50 Recipe Free, For Weak Kidneys

Relieves Urinary and Kidney Troubles, Backache, Straining, Swelling, Etc.

Stops Pain in the Bladder, Kidneys and Back.

Wouldn't it be nice within a week or so to begin to say goodby forever to the scalding, dribbling, straining, or too frequent passage of urine; the forehead and the back-of-the-head aches; the stitches and pains in the back; the growing muscle weakness; spots before the eyes; yellow skin; sluggish bowels; swollen eyelids or ankles; leg cramps; unnatural short breath; sleeplessness and the despondency?

I have a recipe for these troubles that you can depend on, and if you want to make a **quick recovery,** you ought to write and get a copy of it. Many a doctor would charge you $3.50 just for writing this prescription, but I have it and will be glad to send it to you entirely free. Just drop me a line like this: Dr. A. E. Robinson, K-207, Luck Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send it by return mail in a plain envelope. As you will see when you get it, this recipe contains only pure, harmless remedies, but it has great healing and pain-conquering power.

It will quickly show its power once you use it, so I think you had better see what it is without delay. I will send you a copy free—you can use it and cure yourself at home.

The Boy Detective.

(Continued from page twenty-five.)

minutes before, bright stars and a full moon decked the skies, and yet——

The sound that had come vibrating over the telephone interrupting the message over the wires, was——

A crash of thunder!

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this remakable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

An Affecting Tale.

An early settler in Chicago relates an incident in which he was an actor: "As I sat there in the long ago, and, shrouded in the September haze, I was dreaming of a fortunate future for myself, I heard the muffled tread of innumerable feet drawing nearer and nearer to me. The sound was like the footfall of a regiment of infantry approaching, and I rose to see what was the cause.

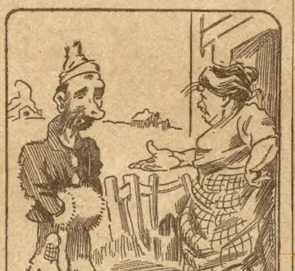
"I had not long to wait, for very soon there was seen a very singular spectacle. First came a large Illinois hog at the head of a long column of Illinois hogs, all march Indian fashion, and grunting with that gentle placid grunt which the hog carries with him. On closer examination into the singular phenomena I saw that all the hogs except the leader were blind, each animal having its predecessor's tail in his mouth throughout the long line,, consisting of thirteen thousand five hundred and twenty-one unfortunate, sightless hogs cheerfully following their leader to the water.

"I was never so much struck with the wonderful instinct of the brute creation in my life, and my eyes filled with tears when I saw the childlike faith and confidence of each blind animal following with implicit trust the more fortunate guide.

"Soon, however, a great, dazzling, three-cornered idea worked itself into my intellect. Dashing away my idle tears, I drew my revolver and shot off the leader's tail, leaving the long line of disconcerted and aimless hogs in the middle of a broad prairie, with no guide but the extreme end of the tail of a hog who was three-quarters of a mile away.

"Then I stole up and taking the gory tail in my hand, I led the trusting phalanx down to the stock yards and sold the outfit at eight cents a pound, live weight. This was the start of my dazzling career as a capitalist, a career to which I now point with pride. Thus, from a poor boy with one suspender and a sore toe, I have risen to be one of our leading business men, known and respected by all, and by industry and economy, and borrowing my chewing tobacco, I have come to be one of our solid men."

* * *



Tramp—Won't you give me somethin', lady? De last one gave some cake.

Mrs. Kindheart—Sure! Here's a pepsin tablet.

*

Reasonable Request.

It was a cold night. The traveler inquired at the only hotel in the little town if he could be lodged for the night, but was informed that it was filled up.

"But you must give me some sort of accommodation," said the stranger. "Surely you don't want me to sleep under the starry but chilly skies?"

"Well," said the proprietor, "the best we can do is to make you a bed in the passage and curtain it off for you." And so it was arranged.

In the dark watches of the night the traveler awoke. A freezing draft chilled him and the sheet which had been hung up as a partition was blowing merrily in the breeze. The traveler rose and shouted for the landlord.

"What is it?" queried a voice from the stairhead.

"Please," said the stranger, timidly, "may I have a paper of pins to lock my bedroom with?"

Write For FREE Catalog

A magnificent piece of furniture, made in American quarter sawed oak finish. Profusely carved, upholstered in best grade Boston leather. Diamond Tufted. Only 50c down and then 50c per month. Price of this rocker, $3.95 **No. A1264**

Take This Rocker For 50c

Send us only 50c and this Superb Rocker goes straight to your home

One of the rarest opportunities to secure a magnificent piece of furniture. Only 50c down—then 50c per month—only $3.95 in all for this elegant, American Quarter Sawed oak finished rocker. And this is only one of the thousand smashing, record-breaking, astounding bargains we offer to you. Send the free coupon now today for our big catalogue.

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You Send Us Only 50c And We Ship You This Go Cart

Storm Shield rolls up and fastens to top of the hood.

This Collapsible Go Cart, full size, Chase leather hood and body in maroon, green or tan, with half inch rubber tires—practically indestructible. The storm shield can be rolled up and fastened to top of hood. Truly—this is a go cart that you could not secure from a regular retail dealer for any less than $15.00. Our price is 50c down, and then 75c per month—$9.45 in all. **No. A 5894.**

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Do not delay an instant! This is positively the best and biggest opportunity for money saving in the country today. But you must write at once or you will be too late. If you want anything in furniture, stoves, rugs, carpets, men's clothing, women's clothing, pianos, go-carts, silverware, lamps, clocks, washing machines, refrigerators, etc. etc. **Fill out the free coupon and mail it to us at once.** We will send you absolutely free and prepaid our big catalog of 3862 bargains—also our special limited monthly bargain list. Do not delay an instant. This is the biggest opportunity to save money that you ever had. Just fill out the free coupon, or a letter or a postal and mail it to us. But do it now—today while offer lasts.

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☐ STOVES AND RANGES
☐ LADIES' CLOTHING
☐ MEN'S CLOTHING

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My address is.............................. 207

If you would like to have any of these special bargains shipped at once, order by number and send only the first small payment.

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Catalogue FREE.

ONLY $10.00

Cash, balance $5 per month, buys this 3-year-guaranteed buggy. Buggies $29.50 up; Surries $45.00 up; Farm Wagons $40.00 up. We trust honest people located in all parts of the world.

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Century Manufacturing Co.,
Dep't 325 East St. Louis, Ill.

A Guaranteed Self-Filling Fountain Pen FREE!

THE GREATEST OFFER BY THE GREATEST NEWSPAPER

THE WONDER
(Actual Size)

You should not be without it. Strong, durable, and will last a lifetime. Can fill with ordinary ink, no need to have a special kind of fountain pen ink or a filler (which you will probably break or lose) and no more inky fingers. All you have to do to fill the pen is to dip the pen point in the ink and turn the scored ring on the end to the right until it stops. When it stops the pen is filled. All very simple, at the same time it works perfectly. Full directions with each pen. Made of best hard, black rubber with a high-grade pen point, made by one of the best fountain pen factories of Germany. They are guaranteed to write perfectly.

OUR GUARANTEE: If any of these fountain pens are defective in make, or will not write through fault of manufacturers, they can be returned and we will replace it by another.

Fill out the Coupon below, enclose it with $1.00 and send it to us at once.

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY,
Chicago,

Gentlemen—Enclosed find $1.00 for one year's subscription to The Chicago Ledger. This Coupon entitles me to the self-filling pen advertised above.

FREE COUPON:

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Street or R.F.D. ....

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State..............................

This is a .... subscription.
New or Renewal

How to get this Pen Free

These self-filling fountain pens will make friends for us and we want every reader of The Chicago Ledger to have one free. To every one who will send us $1.00 for a year's subscription to The Chicago Ledger, we will send one of these splendid self-filling fountain pens absolutely free, all charges prepaid.

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Get a Guaranteed Fountain Pen Free.

CANADA SUBSCRIPTION PRICE
$1.50 PER YEAR.

PICKLED PEPPERS

Much the Same.

First Sranger—Did you ever try to start in business without capital?

Second Stranger—No; but I once tried to sharpen a lead pencil with a pair of scissors.

* * *

The Girl—Before I marry you you'll have to have a million.

The Youth—Dollars or cigar coupons.

Some Place On the Line.

Simeon Ford, the well-known after-dinner speaker, not long ago told this story of a Pennsylvania Sunday School:

A young woman of philanthropic motives was teaching a dozen or more little ones in the mining district.

"Now, where did I tell you the Savior was born?" she asked of the class one morning.

"Allentown!" shrieked a grimy twelve-year-old.

"Why, what do you mean, Thomas? I told you He was born at Bethlehem."

"Well," was the reply. "I knowed 'twuz some place on de Lehigh Valley."

Hard to Tell.

Mrs. Nugent—It's hard to tell whether that Smith woman is careless or deceiving.

Mr. Nugent—What is the difficulty?

Mrs. Nugent—Why, for the last two months she has had that $20 price tag on her $5 cloak, and I don't know whether she has simply neglected taking it off or wants people to think she has just bought the cloak.

Boston Climate.

Traveler—Boston is so far north that I presume you do not have very hot weather there.

Honest Bostonian—Um—er—only in summer.

No Account.

First Man (on big wagon)—Hullup, hullup; you'll run over that policeman.

Second Man—That ain't no policeman; it's only a feller in a blue suit. G'lang!

Had Other Business.

"In one benighted region of a certain State in the Southwest," says a Louisiana lawyer, "they cherish some peculiar notions touching the duties of a juror. One day a case was being tried, when suddenly the justice exclaimed:

" 'How is this? There are only eleven jurymen in the box. Where is the twelfth?'

"The foreman rose and addressed the court respectfully as follows: 'May it please your honor, the twelfth juror had to go away on important business, but he has left his verdict with me.' "

Evils of Drink.

Mrs. Dodds—So your husband is at home with a headache? What is the matter?

Mrs. Podds (a confiding woman)—Too much ice water. He drank three glasses this morning before breakfast.

Colorado Poetry.

Colorado has a poet who refers to a mole on a woman's neck as a "teardrop petrified by its own audacity." Beauty doctors have something to learn.

Directions.

A Belleville merchant has this sign on his store door:

"Come in without knocking, go out the same way."

The Point of View.

"Is a ton of coal very much, pa?"

"It depends on whether you are shoveling it or burning it."

Hodge—Do most girls keep Lent?

Dodge—Well, to judge from the number of marriages at Easter, the only thing they seem to keep is company.

Forgot the Others.

Mabel—There are now over four thousand avocations open to woman.

Clara—Dear me! What are they?

Mabel—Let—me—see. One of them is marriage and the other is—is—— Dear me! I've forgotten the others.

* * *

An optimist seldom has a fit of the blues.

I WANT TO GIVE AWAY THOUSANDS OF 10-DAY TREATMENTS FREE

TO RELIEVE THE SUFFERINGS OF HUMANITY

TEN DAYS TREATMENT FREE

DR. ABBOTT

I want every man or woman reader of this paper who suffers to write me and get this wonderful TEN DAY TREATMENT of mine—FREE.

It is not an experimental distribution of medicine, such as have been made before, that I am offering you. It is not a sample of medicine or a proof, but a bonafide ten-day treatment that has cured a great many people and should cure you. And **it is absolutely free to you.** There is no money to pay. I even pay postage and all charges. **I just want to relieve thousands of sufferers** in return for the success that my thirty-two years of labor in the medical profession have brought me.

If you have rheumatism, back-ache, kidney or bladder troubles, chronic catarrh, or any of the other Uric Acid complaints, such as often are female weakness and so-called male nervous debility, write to me, filling out the little coupon herewith attached and I will send you **at once a full Ten-Day Treatment,** as thousands of earnest testimonials I have in my possession will prove to you.

There is too much sickness in the world **and it is mostly due to neglect.** Long treatments, expensive courses of medicine, with their consequent expense, **are no longer necessary.** I can and **do** cure with these **Ten-Day Treatments** and I want to give thousands of sufferers a chance to profit by my discovery **at my expense. It costs you nothing, now nor at any time.**

Are you racked with pain?

Do you suffer so that your daily work is a torture instead of being a pleasure?

Don't Send Me Any Money,

NOT EVEN POSTAGE—I WILL PAY ALL EXPENSES. BUT IF YOU VALUE HAPPINESS, SUCCESS, A HEALTHY MIND IN A HEALTHY BODY, DON'T WASTE ANY TIME BUT FILL OUT THIS COUPON AND MAIL IT TO ME. REMEMBER IT IS FREE. YOU WILL OWE ME NOTHING NOW OR LATER.

My Ten Day Treatment Positively Cures BACKACHE FREE

Have you lost ambition, zest, enterprise, the desire to better yourself because of pains, aches, dullness?

Has rheumatism set its clutches on your muscles and palsied your limbs so that life is hardly worth living, your days a horror and your nights a terror?

I can relieve your suffering and I want to do it now. Write to me. Fill out the coupon and mail it to me. That is all you need to do. **I will do the rest and it will cost you absolutely nothing.**

Rheumatism, back-ache, kidney troubles, bladder troubles, chronic catarrh, female weakness and the so-called weakness of men are generally due to one cause—uric acid poisoning. My treatment, which is different from all others, will dispel your pains; it will make life worth living. Take it and you will get up in the morning after a sound night's sleep, refreshed and invigorated. Once more your muscles will respond to your will and do so readily without twinges of agony, without reluctance. Your backache will vanish and you will bless me and thank me as have done thousands of others.

This treatment is not an experiment. It does not contain drugs that injure you while giving temporary relief. We have vouched for it according to law.

I am not offering to send you a sample but a full ten days' course of treatment with full instructions as to how to use it and all of it is absolutely free to you.

I want to convince you that it is your duty to yourself and to those who love you and are dependent on you to try this free 10 day treatment of mine.

No man tortured with uric acid complaints is fit for the battle of life. He cannot bring his brain nor his hands to work properly when his body is racked with pain. No woman can care for her home, bring up her children right or work if she is cross, miserable, distracted by suffering. The struggle is too keen, competition too merciless, the fight for success to strenuous to be handicapped by physical ills. To the man or woman who suffers I want to bring relief, comfort, happiness, success. Fill out the coupon attached here and mail to me. **Don't wait until tomorrow,** tomorrow never comes, **do it at once.** With my Ten-Day Treatment, I will also send my book on Uric Acid Diseases. It is a pamphlet full of the results of an experience of thirty-two years, during which I have specialized in uric acid complaints. It contains also a few of the tens of thousands of testimonial letters from preachers, lawyers, men and women of affairs the country over who have not hesitated to say just how much I have benefitted them.

DR. G. B. ABBOTT

P. S. Perhaps you have a friend who is a sufferer. Don't hesitate to have him or her fill out this coupon or write me a letter or you do it for your friend. They will call you blessed.

COUPON

TEN DAYS' TREATMENT FREE

Dr. G. B. Abbott 960 Austen Building, Chicago

Have you pain in the back? ....Have you Rheumatism? ....

Have you Kidney trouble?............Do you get up nights to urinate? ....

Are you constipated? ....Where is the most pain? ....

Have you Catarrh? ....Your age? ....Married or Single ....

Name ....

Address ....